Goethe Gallery

GOETHE
GALLERY

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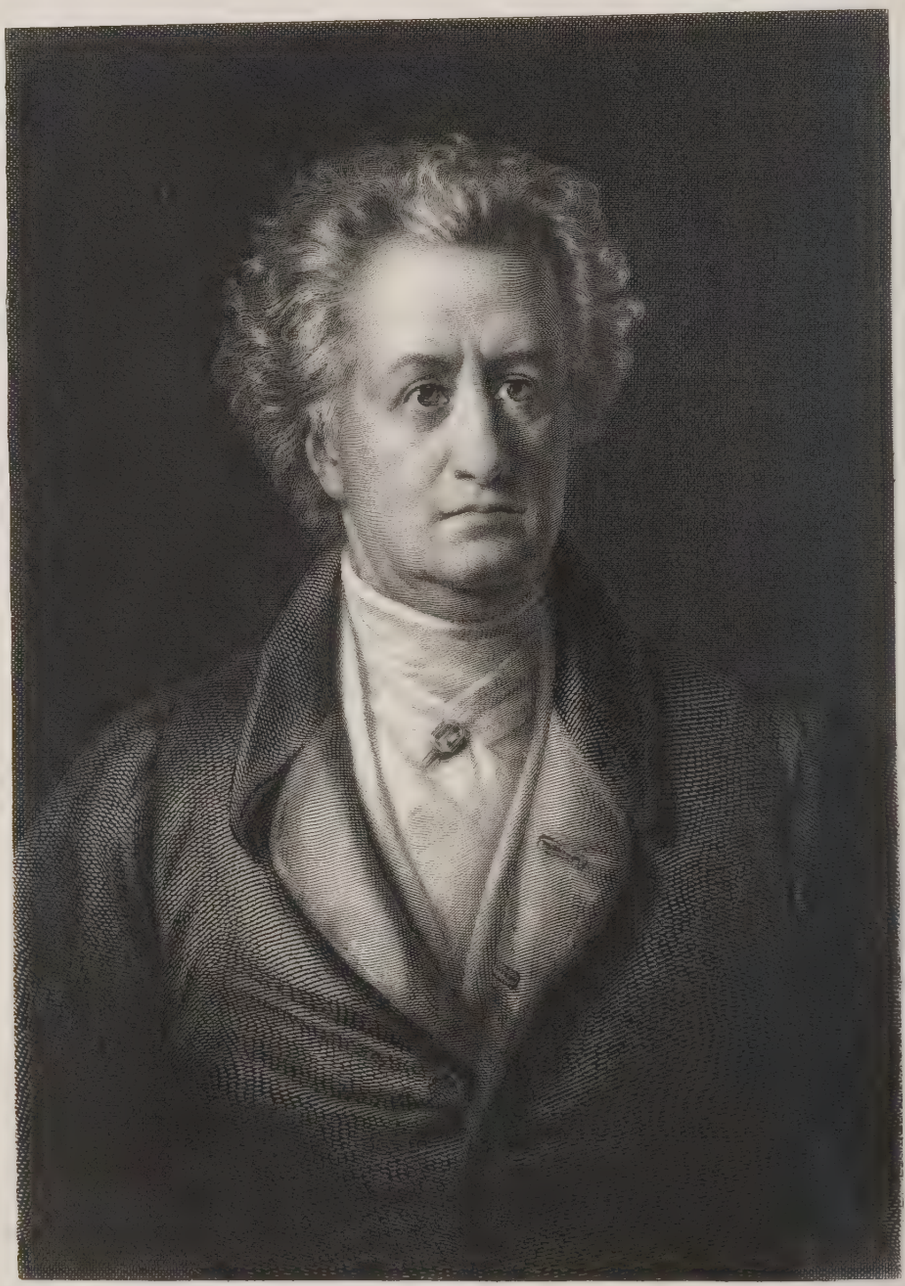




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With the wishes of a
Happy Christmas.
&
New Year



GOETHE GALLERY,

CONTAINING

CHARACTERS FROM GOETHE'S WORKS,

DRAWN BY

FREDERICK PECHT AND ARTHUR VON RAMBERG.

FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS ENGRAVED ON STEEL.

With Descriptive Text,

BY

FREDERICK PECHT.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON & COMPANY,
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1870.

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PREFACE.

Children and books have one point of likeness in common, that their fathers show most affection for those which were the puniest, because these cost them the most of care and labor.

On this ground, the author of this work might be excused if he expressed for the "Goethe Gallery" a preference over the "Schiller Gallery," because it has, in fact, cost him double toil and effort in its preparation. The public cannot, indeed, regard the cause of this additional labor as adding any thing to the merit of the present book, since it arises from the loss of the valuable aid which, in the former work, he received from his friend Arthur von Ramberg. This loss, which could not be foreseen or repaired, was in consequence of his early call to the position of teacher in the Art School of Weimar, his duties there making it impossible for him to perform the labor which he had undertaken in the preparation of this

book. It was necessary, therefore, that I should take upon myself this labor, although it was a matter of sore regret that so much talent and skill could not be employed. While I would not attempt to conceal how much the work has lost through the want of his assistance, yet I hope that the reader will find some compensation therefor in the matter of the engravings. I can with pleasure affirm that many of these, and especially those of Messrs. Raab and Preisel, and of the skilful Sichling (alas for art! too early dead), are truly an honor to German copperplate engraving, and that the whole show a harmony, a freedom, a thorough technical skill, which, with all effort, it is very difficult to attain in works of this kind.

I would that impartial critics could give to the painter the same praise that he is able to give to the engravers. He is not conscious of coming short in attention and effort, although he does not wish to conceal the fact that the task, as well in regard to the public as to himself, was much more difficult than in the case of Schiller. There are several reasons for this. One of them is, that Goethe's figures are almost all taken directly from life, and are very finely individualized and elaborated, so that they are much more difficult for the artist to reproduce than the more indefinite figures of Schiller. The latter are general types, of which the reader can form no clear

and distinct image in his mind, except he add to them those features which give them an individual impress, and a well-defined personality. With Schiller, also, it is the words and acts that chiefly draw our attention, and he thought little how his personages would appear if represented to the eye.

On the contrary, in the reading of Goethe almost every character rises up distinct before the mind's eye; but unhappily, as each reader forms an image correspondent to his own conception, it is a matter of accident how far right this image may be. It is thus a necessary result that opinions greatly differ in regard to the most prominent figures, and that what one deems excellent is faulty to another. And again, experience shows that the subordinate figures, which to most people are not so familiar, are received with the greatest applause, probably for the reason that the artist was more unconstrained in his treatment of them, and labored upon them with more freedom and ease. Beautiful female figures, so finely drawn as those given us by Goethe, are the most difficult tasks for the painter as for the engraver, and it is these figures that are the most prominent and attractive in his poetry. In his delineations of them, he shows a richness of creative power, and such a charm, that the most excellent that representative art can give is scarcely worthy of them. It is from this cause that Schiller, who excelled

most in masculine figures, makes less demands upon the painter.

Another difficulty was, that in Goethe we find much less variety of costume than in Schiller. In the former the personages appear dressed in the old-fashioned style, and to the period when this style prevailed belong his romances and autobiography, and a good part of his dramas. From this cause arises a certain uniformity of costume, which is not noticed in reading, but is at once apparent to the eye.

In fine, no way remained to the artist but to follow resolutely his own judgment, both as to the figures and the text. He learned early, by experience, that, as he made himself familiar with the wonderful descriptions of the poet, the characters gradually became living persons; and, at last, he wholly forgot that he was dealing with mere ideal creations. He began to feel that they were real flesh and blood, men and women, to whom he could stand in direct personal relations, whom he could love and whom he could hate. Thus, coming before him so vividly, he has represented them individually as he saw them, investing each with some attribute drawn from personal experience. The figures of the poet were so inextricably mingled with those with which a tolerably eventful life had stored his memory, that unconsciously they have taken upon them the features of persons whom

he had once known. If, in the whole work, there is any thing of merit, it is this, that whoever takes this book in hand, and carefully reads it, will feel here and there that the author has put into it something of his own feelings and experiences, and he has done this with good reason; for how could we come into any close communion with the spirit of the poet, unless he had known how to describe to us, with inimitable skill and imperishable beauty, what we ourselves have in a greater or less degree felt, or anticipated, or imagined?

To rival Goethe in the picturing of ideal beauty, would be possible only to one equal to him in genius, to a Raphael, and such a contest I must decline. But since one borne along involuntarily by the power of the poet, comes into such personal relations to his characters, that cool reflection is excluded, it is possible that here and there they may have been reproduced with a freshness and distinctness similar to that which he has given them. It is certainly impossible that this could have been done in the way of original and independent creation.

We see often, in museums and galleries, with great interest, the studies of the old masters for portraits and sketches, and which served as a foundation for their ideal figures, and gave them the first impulse to their creation. There may be in these studies something similar that will excite the imagination of the spectator,

and enable him ideally to reproduce the whole beauty of these marvellous creations. If, in Schiller, we reverence the divine in the human, so in Goethe we are enraptured by the pure, sweet humanity of his characters, and it is this that the artist has sought to portray. Happy is he if, in this, he has been even partially successful.

Friedrich Pecht.

Munich, *October*, 1863.

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GOETHE.

If, in the youthful Goethe, we see embodied the Apollo, as with inspired glance he strikes the golden lyre, so in the elder Goethe we seem to see Zeus Chronios in his majestic repose. The dark ambrosial locks, which so richly encircled the head of the young poet, are drawn back from the lordly and ample brow; the beaming eye, that drank in so greedily all the beauty of the world, and whose brightness attracted the admiration of all women, shines still with its old brilliancy, but with clearer light, and with occasional flashes, piercing as the lightning; that mouth which sang such sweet songs, and around which all the graces hovered, and which expressed every emotion of the soul, is become more earnest and silent, and in it we may see a reserved force, an unstilled longing, which tell us that this man, like Faust, will never cease to labor, and to strive to solve the problem of being, although he well knows that he can never attain fully his end, and that his last word will be a cry after "more light."

To live is to suffer, and this is true even of the most fortunate, and certainly Goethe was one of these, since he escaped, not indeed the pain of life, but that *misère* which had so early crushed Schiller. We see, in his countenance, the scars of serious wounds deeply engraven, but none at least of those little daily vexations which disfigure the countenances of most men; there is here to be traced no vulgar bitterness, and no corroding poison has left its deep traces upon his noble face. Time has wrinkled that serene, smooth, splendid brow, where the golden dreams of youth were woven, but what it has taken away in beauty, it has more than given back in loftiness and majesty; the young, inspired, we may almost say genius-intoxicated poet, has become, in his riper years, a mighty ruler in the realm of mind. He, who once enchanted us, now fills us with reverent homage; the supernatural power of his matured genius affects us as strongly, but more nobly.

In his youth, Goethe seemed as if he would storm the heavens; in his maturity, he appeared to have already conquered them, and, seated in quiet possession, drives back, with his lightnings, every intruder.

If, in the youthful Goethe, we see poetic inspiration personified, so, in his maturity, we see Wisdom herself enthroned upon his brow. The perceptive faculty has given place to the reflective, and his nature is penetrated with the desire to fathom the order of creation, and the mysteries of being. Poesy has yielded to philosophy,

and yet has not ceased to be powerful, for one of the most wonderful things in Goethe is his universality, his ability to embrace all the thoughts and emotions that have ever moved the world, or stirred the human heart. But, to youthful ardor, has succeeded a steady warmth of feeling; order has taken the place of early luxuriance; the spontaneity of nature has yielded to the calmness of art; stormy passion, with its resistless eloquence, has given way to contemplation, meditating over mysterious symbols. Now we see, in his works, the beauty of perfected form.

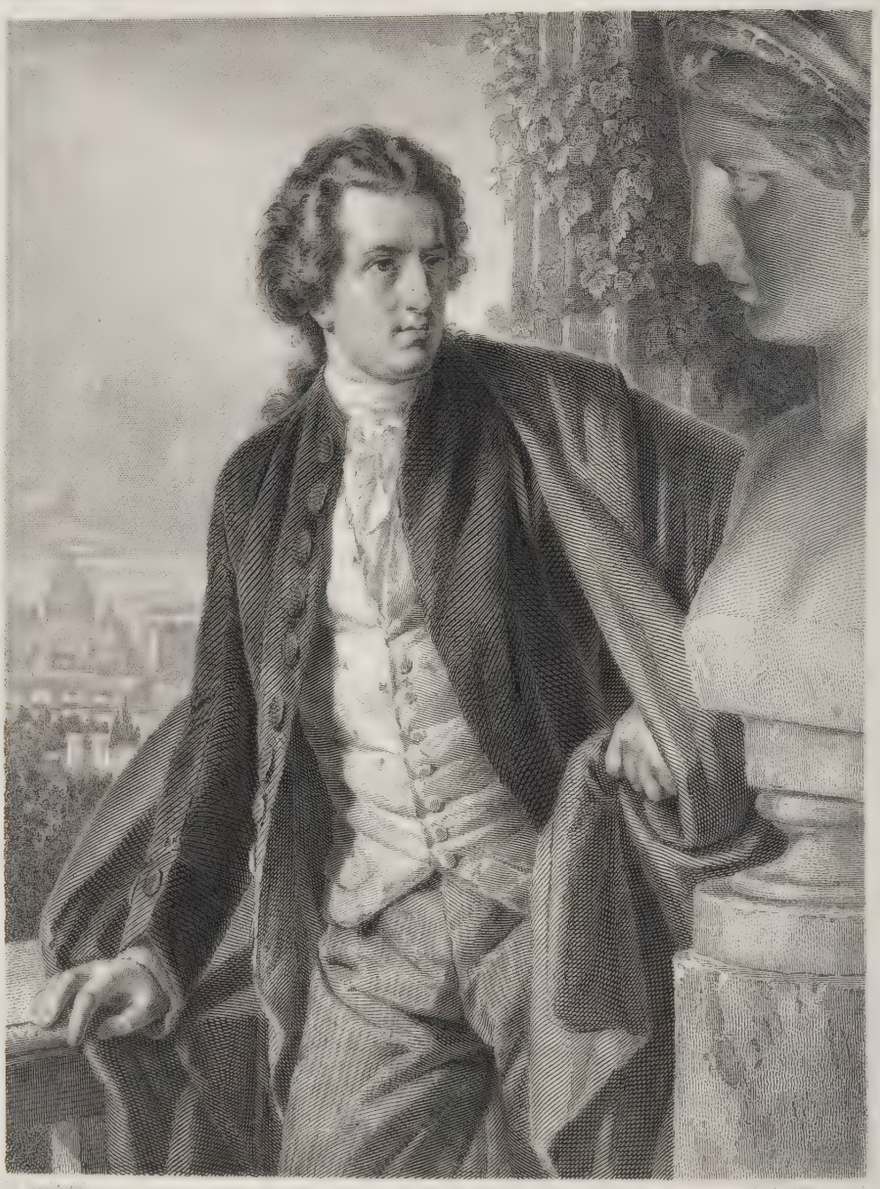
The changes through which Goethe passed, in his development, were very great, and, if we continue to feel the magic power of his early works, we must, nevertheless, marvel at the idealism of his later years. It is something very remarkable that, starting from the sharpest and most thorough realism, his works gradually became more and more idealistic, until, at last, ideality became their prominent characteristic; while, on the other hand, the author himself proceeded in a way directly converse, from almost boundless subjectivity, to clear, objective reality.

One can never exhaust this rich nature of Goethe, and we find an unceasing pleasure in tracing the unfolding of its several faculties, and observing their various combinations. In these combinations, following the law which he has laid down in so masterly a way in the "Elective Affinities," his intellectual life, in its exhaustless

variety, mirrors that of our common humanity. In his first works, "The Conspirators," "Götz," "Werther," "Clavigo," he describes, with great force, the natural play of the passions, and the unrestrained impulses of the soul in its most excited moods. Later, we see gradually developed the desire for formal perfection, a joy in art as such, in pure culture; all resting, indeed, on the basis of nature, but becoming more individualizing and realistic. This progress may be traced in "Egmont," "Tasso," and "Faust," but culminates in "Iphigenia," in which is found the perfection of form with perfect fidelity to Nature.

From this period, the idealistic tendency of Goethe begins to get the mastery, as generally, in the history of civilization, science drives out poetry and art, or at least follows on after them. The form is now the chief thing, as is seen in the "Natural Daughter," where the characters have little individuality, and appear as mere phantoms or abstractions; or as in the second part of "Faust," where they are scarcely more than symbols, while in the first part they truly live and breathe. We find some compensation for this in the deep truths which the poet puts in their mouths, and which he owes to science, to philosophy, and to his study of life. What is deficient in the figures is more than made up in the poet himself. Moreover, this capacity for acute observation led him to the most surprising and most important discoveries in natural science. That realism which he

rejected in his poetry stood him here greatly in stead. But all this was not manifested in chronological sequence, but rather contemporaneously, for the "Hermann and Dorothea" and the "Natural Daughter" were composed about the same time, and very soon after these followed the "Elective Affinities," distinguished by the exactest study of Nature, and which, with its formal perfection, is very defective in its artistic structure. Goethe surprises us ever by his new manifestations, while other artists, like Shakespeare and Walter Scott, continue in the fields in which they won their early conquests, and give us a long succession of similar productions, in which more or less, the author himself is reflected. But, in Goethe, every production is a new birth; it marks a new phase in his life, but it reflects only a single part of his artistic personality, and presents to us continually new problems. We are perpetually astonished by the great richness of his intellect, which was able to encircle and to conquer a larger territory than has been granted to any other mortal. We know only one who can be compared with him in universality of mind, and in contemporaneous mastery in every department of labor—Leonardo da Vinci; although the latter by no means exerted equal influence upon the intellectual development of his nation.





GOETHE IN ROME.

The figure of Goethe is the finest which German life has ever produced. The head of Napoleon, only, can be compared with his, surpassing it indeed in some respects, but in others falling below it. If the one is the head of a conqueror, the other that of our greatest poet, whose conquests were in the realm of mind, this diverse development of two equally significant men is not to be attributed to themselves alone, but also to the nations which produced them, and to the time in which they appeared. We need but remember that Napoleon entered into public life during the bloodiest of warlike periods, while Goethe saw the light in a time of profound peace, in the undisturbed quiet of a pleasant capital, and grew up in the bosom of plenty, and amidst the safeguards of a well-ordered society, in order to explain the necessary divergence of their several careers.

The countries from which they sprang, and the early impressions made upon them, so moulded their characters

that the one naturally became a man of action, and the other a man of thought. It was certainly not accidental that a man, so thoroughly harmonious in his internal and external outline as Goethe, should grow up in one of the most beautiful parts of our wide fatherland, in the pleasant districts of the Rhine, and under its serene sky, for thus he personifies this sunniest region of Germany better than any one, not so nurtured, could do. Here were developed that pleasant, joyous character, that cheerful, mirthful nature, which youth spent in poverty and in daily labor for bread can never acquire. But, in compensation, this struggle with poverty imparts vigor to the will, and, through dissatisfaction with existing circumstances, arouses it to bold undertakings.

As certain as it is that our personal character reflects itself in that which we do, so that the artist's work is a part of himself, just so certain is it that this personal character is again the product and mirror of its time, of its country, and of the special circumstances which have surrounded it. The pride which a nation has in its great men is, therefore, well justified, for they are simply the exponents of its own character, which manifests itself in them in its purest and completest form. They are simply the blossoms; the nation is the tree, upon whose branches they unfold, while it is bearing continually in its bosom new germs of fruitfulness.

If we take Goethe, Schiller, and Frederick the Great, in them we embrace almost all that Germany had of

great men in the eighteenth century. The measure of internal and external freedom which we enjoy is essentially of their sowing, the fruit of their labor. If Schiller and Frederick the Great show us the power of will and of action in the German nature, so above all does Goethe represent its sensibility, its richness, and its universality. If in Schiller the inward rules the outward, and, in the holy glow of his spirit, the ore of the outward world is changed into shining metal, sharp steel and glittering gold; so Goethe takes up all things into himself, and has the keenest eye for every sight, and the finest ear for every sound of nature, and knows how to give these back again so truly, that we believe that we have received them from the hand of Nature herself. Each of these three, working up the material he has received, brings forth a different product, the first of thought, the second of action, and the third of feeling. The finer sensibility and the higher-developed sense of beauty are the special qualities in which Goethe surpassed his two contemporaries, and which are so plainly expressed in his features. His glowing eye drinks in with rapture the beauty of the world; his godlike brow comprehends or anticipates the inner law of every phenomenon; his firm mouth, around which the graces seem to play, is ever changing, but ever expressing the consciousness of power. His whole being is bathed in a sunny glow, but everywhere we see the beauty of harmonious proportions. There is much benevolence in the expression of the countenance, but not

self-sacrifice; rather the capacity of enjoyment, than enjoyment itself. It is the figure of a god that, with its luxuriant fulness of black, curling locks, which as flames surround his exalted head, attracts irresistibly whoever approaches it. It is the expression of the largest intellectual freedom in this head, which so much enchants us, and makes such a mighty impression upon us, that we feel ourselves wholly overpowered. One could perhaps find something effeminate and sybaritic in the expression of Goethe, if there did not appear behind this the loftiness of majesty, the nobility and earnestness of a manly nature, which lend to the attractive beauty of his features something overawing, as, in the brightest Alpine valleys, white glaciers tower high and threatening over luxuriant hills and sunny slopes. Through this mingling of divers and seemingly contradictory elements arises that enchanting, weird-like character, of which every one speaks, who has been permitted to approach this prince of poets.

In our engraving, Goethe is brought before us at the moment when, after his arrival in the Eternal City, in October, 1786, he sees, for the first time, the Juno Ludovici; that bust of the proud goddess which opens to us the whole Hellenic world, in its intoxicating beauty, in its eternal serenity, and its proud self-complacence.

Who has ever wandered through the deep green of the cypress-groves, of that noblest of all the Roman villas, looking down enraptured upon the Eternal City at his feet, silence all around him, and the blazing sunshine

and flowers everywhere; who has ever stood before that noble bust, and not been thrilled with a shudder of wild ecstasy? What power, then, must this sight have had over Goethe, the only man who could dare to approach to such a woman, and to whom the vision of it opened a world of which he had for many years dreamed, and longed earnestly to see. In this contact with antique culture, in the union of its nobility, its beauty of proportions, with the spiritual depth and fervor of his German nature, is to be found the culminating point of Goethe's poetry. Here we see the poet, as the goal of perfection opened before him, and inspired him to reach it. Hitherto he had been the poet of pure Nature, but now, with artistic skill, he would transform Nature, and to her power and truth add dignity through the measured and melodious beauty of his speech.

The artist has made chief use of the famous bust of Trippel, which was wrought when Goethe was in Rome, and gives us all that we can expect or desire from a bust of the poet, and which is to be reckoned as one of the most successful efforts of modern art. Tischbein's well-known portrait, which was painted at the same time, has been of service, although it can in no way be compared to the bust. The latter is open to objection, unless it be that it gives us simply the noblest traits of the man, and shows us nothing of the spruce character of the Frankfort burgher's son, nor of the formal privy-councillor, as he sometimes appears in the later representations of Reuch.

We can, certainly, so much more readily pardon this, since Goethe was most completely emancipated from all these fripperies when in Italy, and at this period of his life, and it belongs to art to show forth the qualities that exalted him above his time, rather than those which he possessed in common with it and with ordinary men.





THE COUNCILLOR'S LADY GOETHE.

The assertion is often made, that great men have usually had remarkable mothers, who transmitted to them their distinguishing qualities; but this is scarcely more than a glittering paradox. At least, it is known of men like Alexander, Charles, Frederick the Great, Hannibal, Raphael, Holbein, Mozart, and of a great multitude of statesmen, artists, and learned men, that they were more indebted to their fathers than to their mothers; if the son follows the profession of the father, it becomes comparatively easy to surpass him, for the reason that the father instructs him early in the technical parts of his profession, and that he commonly takes special pains to teach him those things in respect to which he most felt his own deficiencies. It is pleasant to look upon a son as one who may successfully carry out what the father has begun, and realize those plans which he was himself unable to accomplish.

Under the name of the Councillor's Lady, Goethe's

mother has been transformed into a kind of mystical character of indefinite greatness, and regarded as one possessing some high intellectual qualities. Especially Bettina has attributed to her not only much of his genius, but also of his perversity.

There is nothing of all this to be found in what Goethe himself narrates of his mother, although he loved her tenderly and was certainly not inclined to undervalue her. According to him, she was, both in mind and body, a healthful and beautiful woman, and it is her chief merit that she transmitted to her son this blooming healthfulness of body and soul, her own serenity and cheerfulness. In other respects, we find her, in a true, motherly way, the constant mediator and peacemaker in the frequent conflicts between the stern and pedantic, although cultivated and strong-minded father, and the imaginative and often eccentric son; that this was by no means unnecessary, his own autobiography shows plainly enough, and, in reading it, one is often tempted more to admire the patience of the parents with his boisterous extravagance, than to accuse them of too great strictness toward him, around whom, as the jewel of the family, the whole domestic economy revolved.

We thus meet the Councillor's Lady everywhere as a sunny, bright, transparent nature, a true image of the Rhineland, inclined to sport and play, demeaning herself to the two children more as an elder sister than as a strict mother, and surrounding her son with those

elements of love and warmth which are the necessary conditions of the full unfolding of youthful faculties. Since her affection and cheerfulness had nothing in common with the ape-like tenderness of some mothers, who can only brood over their stunted and weak fledglings, and indulge them in any folly, it was the more beneficial to our young poet. It was first in Leipsic that, through the flattery of his friends, he began to show some weak, arrogant, excitable traits of character, but his sound nature delivered him from them so soon as he returned back to his mother, upon the vine-clad banks of the Main.

Our Councillor's Lady is, in one respect, wholly the opposite of the women educated in North and Middle Germany, in that she has no trace of sentimentality; she was eminently active and practical. Goethe says of her friend Klettenberg, and of herself:

"I called them Word and Deed, for, when the former cast her serene, or rather blissful glance over earthly things, what was confusion to us children of earth, at once grew plain before her, and she could almost always point out the right way, because she looked upon the labyrinth from above, and was not herself entangled in it. When a decision was once made, the readiness and energy of my mother could be relied on. While the former had Sight for her aid, the latter had Faith, and, as she maintained her serenity in all cases, she was never without the means of accomplishing what was proposed or desired."

There is good ground to believe that his mother occupied herself much more with the stockings than with the poems of her son, although she may have felt prouder of the latter than of the former. It cannot be at all denied,

for it is well authenticated that she took much more interest in his flesh-and-blood children than in the children of his genius. He himself narrates, very charmingly, how she busied herself with marriage plans for him, and also looked forward to the natural results:

"One day I surprised my mother in a garret examining the old cradles, among which an immense one of walnut inlaid with ivory and ebony, in which I had formerly been rocked, was especially prominent."

Plainly the arrival of a legitimate occupant for this fine piece of furniture was much dearer to her than the daily coming of his many literary friends:

"The aimless bustle in which I had for some time lived was not to her mind, and in fact she had to bear the worst of it. It was her part to provide abundant entertainment for the stream of guests, without any compensation for furnishing quarters to this literary army, other than the honor they did her son by feasting upon him."

A very good illustration of her character is found in the account which Goethe gives, with much humor, of the coming of the young Counts Stolberg, who after dinner expressed very strongly their hate of tyrants, and brought out their revolutionary sentiments with the dessert:

"My father smiled and shook his head; my mother had scarcely heard of a tyrant in her life; however, she recollected having seen the copper-plate engraving of such a monster in Gottfried's Chronicles, viz., King Cambyses, whom he describes as having shot, with an arrow, a little son of an enemy, through the heart, and boasting of his deed to the father's face. This still stood in her memory. To give a cheerful turn to the conversation, which continually grew more violent, she betook herself to her cellar, where her oldest wines lay carefully preserved in large casks.

"As she set before us the rich-colored wine, in the polished decanter, she exclaimed, 'Here is the true tyrant's blood, glut yourselves with this, but let all murderous thoughts go out of my house.'"

It is in this comical scene that she is brought before us as truthfully as is possible from the knowledge we have, and we are able clearly to see the agreeable, cheerful, and substantial elements of her character.

She resembled her son chiefly through the brilliant, sparkling brown eyes, through the finely-cut, graceful mouth, and the resolute and energetic chin—the eagle nose and high brow seemed to have descended to him from his father.

One can often judge persons most correctly when their ideals are brought before us. Goethe's mother found hers in the bold wife of Götz, in whom (as her son relates) she saw her own image reflected, and to whom indeed she may in many respects be likened. And this to her great honor, for it is the mission of women not to lead us away from Nature, but ever to lead us back to it again.





CORNELIA GOETHE.

Who does not know that genius and women are as inseparably united as voice and echo?

If, then, we find that, in the life of every great man, and especially of the poet, women play a most important part, this is easily explained. He strikes the strings to wonderful melodies, but it is they who give responsive echoes, and without whom the songs would pass away like empty sounds. It is the response that inspires the singer, and develops his highest powers. For the very reason that woman is rarely of creative talent, is she the better able to feel and to appreciate the productions of men of original minds. We can, therefore, look upon the manner in which she is affected as a touchstone of genius. If, with all her susceptibility, she is not moved, we may conclude that the world at large will hear with indifference.

We do not mean that genius always attracts women; it may often very strongly repel them. And this is exemplified in Goethe, who, though he so thoroughly

knew the female heart, and could describe it so finely, and was himself full of personal fascination, was, nevertheless, not at all a favorite with the larger number of ladies he met.

Among all the females with whom the poet stood in intimate relations during his early life, no one was so intimate with him, and exerted so great an influence over him, as his sister Cornelia. Next to the love of a mother, that of a sister is the most pure and unselfish, and this Goethe possessed in full measure. Cornelia is the chaste moon reflecting the dazzling light of her brilliant brother with a gentler, softer glow. Only one year younger than he, she resembled him so strikingly that they were often taken for twins; he himself says:

"She was tall, well and delicately formed, and had something naturally dignified in her demeanor which melted away into a pleasing mildness; the lineaments of her face, neither striking nor beautiful, indicated a character which was not and could not be at union with itself. Her eyes were not the finest I have ever seen, but the deepest, behind which you expected the most, and, when they expressed any affection, any love, their brilliancy was unequalled. And yet, properly speaking, this expression was not tender, like that which comes from the heart, and at the same time carries with it something of longing and desire, this expression came from the soul, it was full and rich, it seemed as if it would only give without needing to receive."

Does he not here describe his own look also?

"But what, in a manner quite peculiar, disfigured her face so that she would often appear positively ugly, was the fashion of those times, which not only bared the forehead, but either accidentally or on purpose did every thing apparently or really to enlarge it. Now, as she had the most feminine, most neatly-arched forehead, and, moreover, a pair of strong black eyebrows and prominent

eyes, these circumstances occasioned a contrast which, if it did not repel every stranger at the first glance, at least did not attract him."

Our picture is after a sketch taken by himself, which, though the work of a novice, has still the impress of truth, so that the artist needed only to fill up the outlines from the above description. The statement that her features were neither striking nor beautiful does not correspond with this sketch, nor is it consistent with her strong likeness to him; besides this, at a later period he thus expresses himself respecting her:

"Having a character firm, and not easily to be moved from its purposes, a soul sympathizing and needing sympathy, remarkable intellectual capacities, much knowledge, acquainted with several languages, and holding a skilful pen, had she been favored by circumstances, she would have been ranked with the most esteemed women of her time."

We can believe that, if she was not regarded as handsome, the defect was chiefly in taste and dress.

The difference in their characters made her cling so much the more closely to him, as Goethe himself says:

"She, only a year younger than I, had lived my whole conscious period of life with me, and was thus bound to me by the closest ties."

And continues:

"The necessity she felt for entertaining herself with me, was still sharpened by the sense of longing with which she accompanied me to a distance; and, as, in our first years, playing and learning, growth and education, had been quite common to both of us, so that we might well have been taken for twins, so did this community remain."

How touching is the tone of deep feeling and affec-

tion which he, generally so cold, uses when he speaks of her:

"As I lost this beloved, incomprehensible being but too soon, I felt inducement enough to make her worth present to me. Now nothing remains for me but to call up for a moment that blessed spirit, as if by the aid of a magic mirror.

"Indeed, if her exterior was in some measure repulsive, the mind that gleamed through it was also rather repelling than attractive, for the presence of any one excellence throws others back upon themselves. She felt this sensibly; she did not conceal it from me, and her love was directed to me with so much the greater force. The case was singular enough. As confidants, to whom one reveals a love-affair, actually by genuine sympathy, become lovers also, nay, grow into rivals, and at last, perchance, transfer the passion to themselves, so it was with us two; for, when my connection with Gretchen was torn asunder, my sister consoled me the more earnestly.

"But, since love was as essential to my sister as to any human being, she turned her affection wholly upon me; her care, in nursing and entertaining me, absorbed all her time. Her female companions, who were swayed by her, without her intending it, had likewise to contrive all sorts of things to be pleasing and consolatory to me. And even my wanderings and occasional absence necessarily bound us closer together, as I discoursed with her by letter respecting every thing that occurred to me, communicated to her every little poem, if even only a note of admiration, and let her first see all the letters which I received, and all the answers which I wrote."

She is brought before us holding one of these communications in her hand, enjoying it, and yet also criticising it, for she was by no means without critical gifts. This critical faculty is shown most in those letters to her brother, and to her female friends, which Jahn has preserved for us, and in which we see quite another side of her character, for, with all the penetration of a

true feminine mind, they reveal also a feeling of dissatisfaction which is often painful. At a later time, Goethe said in regard to this:

"Enough, she felt herself alone, perhaps neglected, and therefore the more readily gave a hearing to the honest wooing of an honorable man."

Her future history was not happy, and is easily understood. Accustomed to intercourse with her gifted brother, even so worthy a man as Schlosser really was must have seemed to her dry and distasteful. With her separation from her beloved Wolfgang, the richness and splendor of her life passed away, her sun had gone down —she died early.



A. Schultheiss sculp.

FREDERIKA.

"And truly there arose in this rural sky a most charming star," said Goethe, when he described the appearance of the lovely parson's daughter, of Sesenheim, with that serene cheerfulness which the memory of youthful joys so readily calls forth in us in our old age.

It is a happy feature of human nature, that we much better remember the beautiful and the pleasant in our experiences than those things that have caused us pain and sorrow. In the lively picture that the old poet gives us of that charming episode of his youthful life, how skilfully is he able to represent to us all the sunshine of youth, its bright, harmless impulses, the feeling of power and health, even its intellectual superciliousness, and in colors that can never fade! Is there not a true, summer-like, Sunday-morning tone in the whole description?

In the afternoons, the air is certainly hotter and sultrier, the sky is overcast, and there is a little shower.

but the clouds soon pass away, after their drops have laid the dust, and in the golden evening light gleams the glorious Alsatian land, more splendid now through the tears of painful remembrance.

Who is not sometimes overtaken by this melancholy, when he recalls the joys of youth, now long past; when he compares the present calmness of his breast with its early storm and passion, and remembers the luxuriant fulness, the inexhaustible richness of feeling, which threatened to squander itself in all excesses? Happy for us, if, in the course of life, we have been successful in coining the early treasure of the unminted gold of the feelings into current coin of ideas, knowledge, and experiences, for then we may still regard ourselves as rich, although we have garnered these up more in our heads than in the treasury of the heart! But our memories are too often like the double-paged leaves of a book, where, upon one side, we read the confession of a crime, and on the other the memorial of joys passed away. In the heart of Goethe, was the image of Frederika written upon such a double-paged leaf? We do not believe it, although upon the last page her image is pictured in a somewhat darker color than upon the first.

We do not conceal from ourselves that our lovely readers, who, as is to be expected, take the part of Frederika, may not agree with us here, even if we set forth our reasons to them, as we are about to do.

We find Frederika described as a wholly naïve, ami-

able, sprightly child. Attractive, graceful, of a bright, airy nature, she went out joyously into the world, which mirrored itself sunnily in her clear blue eyes. She did not comprehend, nor even suspect, the powerful intellect of him who played with her in such a careless, childlike manner; how should she have been able to comprehend him?

But what one does not understand, that one has no right to possess, indeed, never can possess, even if he have it under lock and key. The nature of Frederika was not fitted for so great a conquest; her rural education made it perfectly impossible. A man can often lift himself up to a higher culture, even if his youthful years have been spent in a very humble position, but a woman never, unless she be of very uncommon mould.

The flames of genius with which she for a time amused herself could not have been restricted to the narrow limits within which she would confine them, and, bursting forth, must have destroyed her.

The last would have been for her a great misfortune, but the former a great calamity to the world. That she felt this, and voluntarily resigned him, gives to her pure, calm, and devoted spirit its highest crown; and this self-renunciation, is it not rewarded with imperishable glory, with immortal beauty? Does she not live still in a million of hearts, because she was willing to refuse one heart so nobly? Is there a woman who, for

this prize, would not be Frederika—the prize to live beloved in the memory of a nation, and be remembered as one who had been held worthy of him, the highest and best of the sons of German soil?

It is the lot of every thing beautiful that it must quickly perish, and return to the eternal fountain of all goodness; but is it not a nobler destiny for the wild rose to glow for a summer day upon the breast of the poet, although continually liable to fall as he marches on in his triumphal course, than to be torn from its stem by the first passing storm?

Be this as it may, she has bloomed and shone, has whispered to the poet immortal songs, has not lived in vain, as millions of her sisters. She attained to the feeling of highest blessedness, of a blessedness that suffices with its reflection to beautify all the long-following life of duty.

That Frederika was sufficiently elevated in mind to comprehend her relations to Goethe, as all the testimonies show, invests her with an imperishable glory, and makes the figure of the beautiful maiden so much the dearer to us, because it is one proof more of that true feminine nature which so much attracted Goethe to her. Fortunately, he had sufficient understanding and reserve not to wish to transplant this field-flower into the city, but left it there, where it adorned the whole meadow. As he has described to us her appearance most charmingly, so has the artist sought to represent her, as she is

walking over the flowery meadows, half floating as she goes, uniting the culture of the city and the simplicity of the country, her eyes bright, and her cheeks glowing with youthful pleasure. In the background is the rich Alsatian plain, a paradise now lost to Germany, and which we have to win again with the flaming sword, if we would be worthy of our poet, who won it for us by his song.



W. Hunt del.

Hunt sculp.



LILI.

Of all the female figures which Goethe has drawn, he has embellished none with such peculiar charm as that of Lili, the well-known successor of Frederika. If his account of the latter forms a rustic idyl, fresh and sparkling as the dew, his account of the former may be compared to a parlor play, over which hangs that indescribable atmosphere of illusion which is produced by the presence of beautiful women in rustling silk robes, and gloves and Brussels lace, and surrounded with perfumes, tea-urns, gilding, and rococo figures. In the one all is genuine, natural, unaffected; in the other is a mingling of coquetry, and the splendor and beauty of art must compensate for depth of feeling, and factitious excitement supply what is wanting in love.

We meet Elisabeth Schönemann, for such is her proper name, in the sitting-room, at the piano, and here the future lovers begin their courtship. The young woman made upon the poet a most pleasing impression,

but he was chiefly attracted by the cleverness of her conversation and simplicity of manners. He says of her:

"She had grown up in the enjoyment of all the advantages of society and worldly comforts; she described to me her brothers, her relations, and all her nearest connections, only her mother was kept in a respectful obscurity.

"Little weaknesses, too, were thought of, and among them she could not deny that she had often remarked in herself a certain gift of attracting others—that she had exercised this gift upon me too, but had been punished for it, since she had been attracted by me also.

"These confessions flowed forth from so pure and childlike a nature, that by them she made me entirely her own. I could not be without her, nor she without me; but from this circle which surrounded her, and through the interference of its individual members, how many days were spoiled, how many hours wasted!"

In all this there was little but coquetry on both sides, but gradually the heart became more interested, and Goethe expressed his feelings in verses like the following:

"Heart, my heart, oh what hath changed thee,
What doth weigh on thee so sore;
What hath from myself estranged thee,
That I scarcely know thee more?"

He says:

"Whoever reads these songs attentively to himself, or, better still, sings them with feeling, will certainly feel a breath of the fulness of those happy hours stealing over him."

Doubtless this is so, but there is here very little of real passion, nor can we find it in what he says later:

"It was altogether a brilliant time; a certain excitement reigned in the company and there were no insipid moments.

"As is usual in such cases, we did not expressly say it to one another, but

the feeling of being mutually pleased in every way, the full conviction that separation was impossible, the confidence reposed in one another, all this produced such a seriousness, that I, who had firmly resolved never again to get involved in any troublesome connection of the kind, and who found myself nevertheless entangled in this, without the certainty of a favorable result, was actually beset with a heaviness of mind, to get rid of which I plunged more and more in indifferent worldly affairs."

Is not this a curious ending to so brilliant a beginning? Nevertheless, an old maid with a match-making propensity brings about at last their betrothal, one may almost believe, to their mutual perplexity:

"'Take each other by the hand,' cried she. I stood opposite to Lili, and offered her my hand; she, not indeed hesitatingly, but still slowly, placed hers in it. After a long and deep breath, we fell with lively emotion into each other's arms."

Matters had now taken a new shape, and there was more of reflection if not of rapture:

"There are depth and significance in the old remark, 'On the summit of fortune one abides not long.' As soon as the ideal, as we may well call it, of a betrothal is over, and it begins to pass into the actual, and to enter soberly into facts, then too often comes a crisis; the world immediately presses upon them with incompatible demands, which, if not satisfied, make the young couple appear ridiculous."

One asks, astonished, whence this coolness; and can scarcely comprehend it, since no real obstacles to their union existed, if he does not remember that this playing at love had continued during a whole summer. One hinderance, indeed, we had almost forgotten:

"Different religious opinions produce different manners, and if the amiable

girl had wished to continue in any way her former mode of life, it would have found neither opportunity nor place in our moderate-sized house.".

This, alas! was an obstacle not to be overcome:

"We thus suppress our doubts, we dwell only on what is favorable; by powerful activity we overcome all wavering, whence there results a something untrue in our position, without the force of passion being in the least subdued."

Finding that his father's house is too small for another family, in his despair he seeks alleviation by studying the deeds of Frederick the Great, and Catharine, and Paoli of Corsica, and finally, from excess of love, goes to spend a couple of months in Switzerland. On his way he visits his sister, and she presses on him earnestly a separation from Lili:

"She thought it hard to take such a young lady, of whom she had formed the highest opinion, out of the midst of a lively if not splendid circle, and shut her up in our old house."

He is convinced, but proceeds on his journey; and the sight of a little golden heart suggested the following lines:

"Round my neck suspended, as a token
Of those joys that swiftly passed away,
Art thou here, that thou mayst lengthen love's short day,
Still binding when the bond of souls is broken!"

It is plain that one need not feel anxious in regard to the violence of his passion; he was evidently quite calm and composed, for he says:

"On my return I did not, I could not, avoid seeing Lili—it was an accursed state."

It was at this time that he first noticed the crowd of other suitors:

"All the mercantile friends of the eminent house came one by one, and it was soon manifest that not a man among them was able or willing wholly to give up a certain claim to the lovely daughter.

"The older gentlemen, with their uncles' ways and manners, were altogether intolerable; they could not bridle their hands, and in the midst of their disagreeable twaddle would demand a kiss.

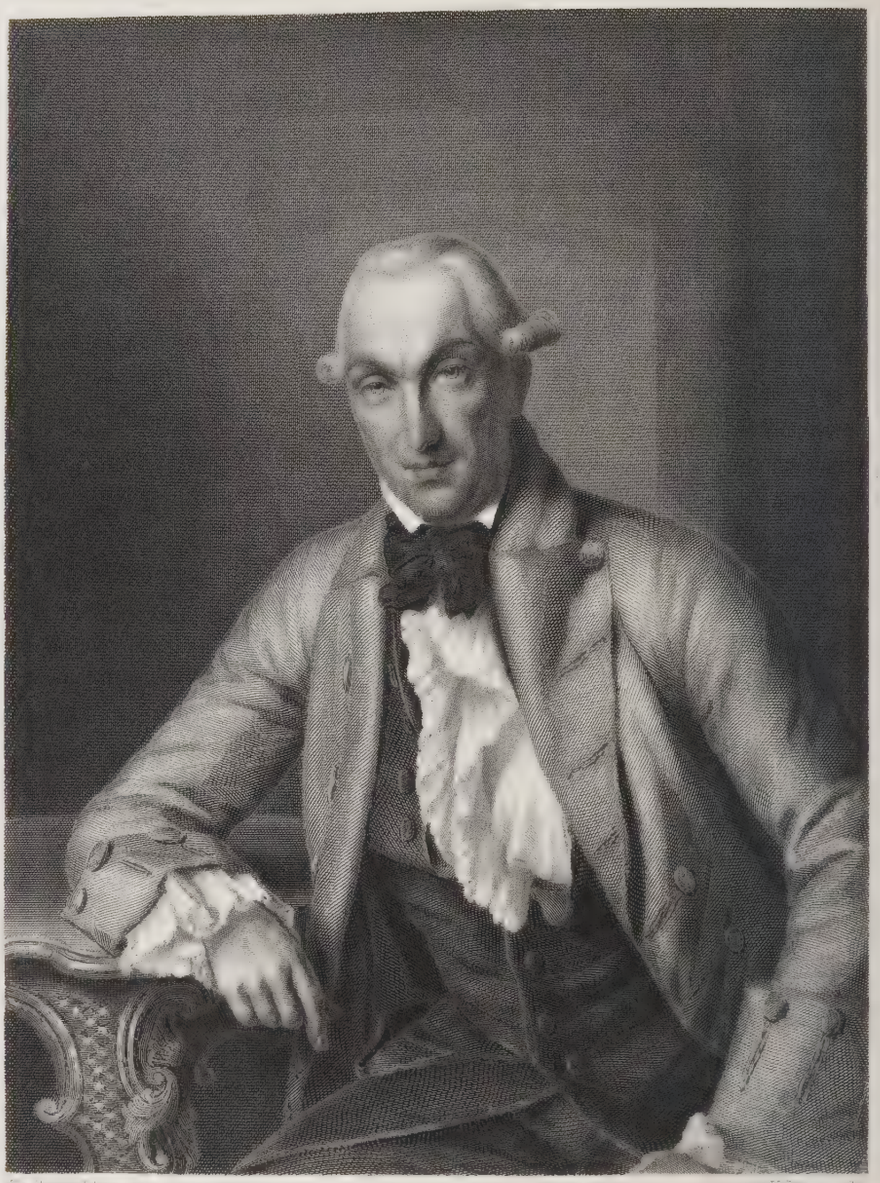
"But let us turn from this torture, of which the memory even is almost intolerable."

One sees that it was not necessary that the young poet's father should say, "These fine ladies will by no means interest him"—the danger had never been great.

This love-history closes with at least one touching scene. Resolved to go and make his abode at Weimar, he walks at evening by her window:

"Soon I heard her singing at the piano; it was the song 'Ah, why resistless dost thou press me!' which I had written for her hardly a year before."

This strongly affected the poet, but did not prevent him from journeying as he proposed. In this situation, so graphically described by him, she is brought before us in the picture. The artist has drawn the charming head after a portrait still existing, and one that shows more of mind and feeling and less of coquetry than Goethe's account would lead us to believe, and which justifies the surmise that the fault was much more his own than that of the Frankfort banker's brilliant daughter.



JOHN HENRY MERCK.

Is it not a high advantage which our nation has over many others, and especially over the French, that our great men claim admiration not only because of their intellectual endowments, but also because of their characters? How high in this relation stand our Schiller and Goethe, for example, above Voltaire and Rousseau! How noble, pure, and distinguished is their whole being; how little can we associate any thing that is commonplace or vulgar with them; no defilement clings to the pure gold of their mind; its glittering flames would have immediately consumed it! He, therefore, who stood so near to them as Merck to Goethe, has in advance a claim upon our consideration; and this the more, since the poet testified so favorably of him in the words, "that he had exerted the greatest influence upon him." How significant this influence was, is, moreover, very plainly marked in Goethe's words. Merck was to him the type of a whole genus.

Painters do not alone need models—poets need them not less; and thus we have, without doubt, in him the original of Mephistopheles, and of Carlos and Antonio. At least the poet has surely borrowed from him individual features for each of these characters. This alone would sufficiently prove that there must have been something uncommon in him, since artists do not take for types insignificant figures, but those that are full of meaning. Besides this, our poet would not otherwise have honored him with so long and true a friendship—a friendship which is alike honorable to both, since it puts beyond question the merit of the one, and the true and deep feeling of the other. Goethe describes him to us in brief sketches in his "Truth and Poetry:"

"When I made his acquaintance, he was military paymaster at Darmstadt; born with mind and understanding, he had acquired much elegant knowledge, especially in modern literature, and had paid attention to all times and places in the history of world and of man. He had the talent of judging with certainty and acuteness. He was prized as a thorough, decisive man of business, and a ready accountant. With ease he gained an entrance everywhere, as a very pleasant companion for those to whom he had not rendered himself formidable by sarcasms. His figure was long and lean; a sharp, prominent nose was remarkable; light blue, perhaps gray eyes, gave something tiger-like to his glance, which wandered attentively here and there. Lavater's 'Physiognomy' has preserved his profile for us. In his character there was a wonderful contradiction. By nature a good, noble, upright man, he had embittered himself against the world, and allowed this morbid whim to sway him to such a degree that he felt an irresistible inclination to be wilfully a rogue, or even a villain. Sensible, quiet, kind at one moment, it might strike him in the next, just as a snail puts out his horns, to do something which might hurt, wound, or even injure another."

He further says of him—

"That while now, by this morally restless mind, by this necessity of treating men in a malignant and spiteful way, he on one side destroyed social life, another disquiet, which also he very carefully fostered within himself, opposed his internal comfort."

And so much the more, as he was dissatisfied not to play a more distinguished part among the cultivated intellects of his time, since he had full consciousness of his ability to do so:

"I myself still possess poetical epistles full of uncommon boldness, force, and Swift-like gall, which are highly remarkable from their original views of persons and things, but are at the same time written with such wounding power, that I could not publish them even at present. However, the fact, that in all his labors he went to work negatively and destructively, was unpleasant to himself, and he often declared that he envied me that innocent love of setting forth a subject which arose from the pleasure I took both in the original and the imitation."

With all this, he was nevertheless of a dilettantic and not of a creative nature, since the negative, skeptical element in him was too strong. Do we not find here, also, some traits of Mephistopheles?

In like manner has Goethe borrowed from him the manner in which Mephistopheles treated the students in Auerbach's cellar:

"So was Merck a deadly enemy to all the academical citizens, who, indeed, at that time, at Giessen, took delight in the greatest rudeness."

Also, as it seems, was the relation of Mephistopheles to Margaret derived from him, since Goethe was much

annoyed by his remarks at Wetzlar, in relation to Charlotte:

"I could scarcely wait any time till I had introduced him to Charlotte, but his presence in this circle did me no good; for as Mephistopheles, let him go where he will, hardly brings a blessing with him, so did he, by his indifference toward that beloved person, cause me no joy, even if he did not make me waver."

Afterward he brings him before us with La Roche in "Elective Affinities," and, according to the description which he gives of him, Merck may well, also, have sat for Antonio. He calls him cold and restless; indeed, narrates how he had almost caused him to destroy "Werter," by his cold and unappreciative judgment. Of "Clavigo" he had said:

"Such trash thou must write no more, others can do that."

In short, we meet with so much that is seemingly to his disadvantage, that we should scarcely be able to understand the attachment of Goethe to his friend, and the very high value which he plainly attributed to his judgment and approbation, unless we had been told how he, in a better mood, recognized the merit and significance of "Werter," and especially how he one day had said to him:

"Thy striving, thy unswerving effort, is to give a poetic form to the real; others seek to give reality to the so-called poetic, to the imaginative; and of that nothing will ever come but stupid stuff."

There is here compressed in a couple of lines the

sharpest and best criticism that has ever been made upon Goethe's productions, and we can immediately understand how he not only influenced the young poet, but also could compel him, when old and crowned with glory, to make the confession:

"I could believe that I could see farther than he did, although I did not in fact do this, but only knew how to appreciate those ideas of character which lay beyond the circle of his vision."

He further says of him:

"In his way he knew me thoroughly; the naïve and indomitable good-nature of my character was painful to him; the everlasting purpose to take things as they are, to live and let live, was his detestation."

From this image, drawn with master-strokes, one can well understand the man and his manner, and still better the power of attraction which, in spite of all his faults, he exerted over Goethe, since Merck knew how to appreciate him better than any one else at that time, and was also in a certain degree his complement. So long as Goethe reigned at Weimar, was Merck with him there; and was at court a frequent and gladly-welcomed guest. His acute understanding and knowledge of the world combined to make him at the same time both liked and feared at court, since the men who do not in some measure inspire fear are seldom loved long, and still more rarely esteemed. Natures so unboundedly productive as that of Goethe, and which dislike to occupy themselves much with criticism, like to have critical minds as com-

panions, since they take for them the place of the æsthetic conscience. It was this post that our Merck seems for a long time to have filled, and better than any one else, in respect to the poet, who in thankful remembrance has preserved his name to posterity.



GÖTZ VON BERLICHINGEN.

(*Götz von Berlichingen.*)

Literary history has seldom ever known such success as Goethe's "Götz" obtained at its first appearance in Germany, and nevertheless the name of its author was wholly unknown. One could scarce see in the blue sky of our then literary heaven the little cloud from which flashed forth this glittering bolt, and came the thunder that reverberated through all the German valleys.

In order to comprehend how this wonderful effect was produced, one must clearly understand the spirit of that time, the deep repose, if we should not rather say sleep, into which Germany had fallen; a time when the public taste rejoiced in the epicurean Greek imitations of Wieland, and in the pedantries of Gottsched, and was busily engaged in digesting the rugged verses of Klopstock, although we would not underrate the service which this genuine German poet did, as against the French school on the one hand, and the ultra-German on the other. Lessing had indeed already written, a true man, whose works were a part of himself, a fact which the

literary mask he wore could only partially conceal. But he had not sufficient genius to be more than the bright morning twilight, with its cool, fresh breeze; he had awakened Germany from her sleep, but she was still very drowsy. The taffeta smallclothes and coats, the lace ruffles, the silk stockings and powdered locks, the rouge and patches of that time, were outward symbols of that luxurious quietism whose opposite is symbolized by the stiff, old-fashioned Prussian cue. In neither of the directions indicated was further progress possible, and Wieland had carried his effeminacy so far as already to have awakened disgust. Into this gayly-dressed circle now trod the heavy, resounding foot of the mailed Götz. On their richly-carved doors knocked his iron fist, buckled to the nervous arm of a true man. Was it, then, marvellous, when the air was filled with clouds of hair-powder arising from the shock, that all the rugged youth held jubilee?—those youth whose lullabies had been the cannon-thunders of the Seven-Years' War, and who heard the old, beautiful, arousing melody swelling up again with its original wild freshness and power—a melody which made the sweet twittering singers of the Göttinger grove to be forgotten.

Götz is a good, honest German, and thus corresponds to the ideal of that time, but a hero besides, not a sluggard. One feels that our blood streams, also, through his veins, only in fuller and stronger currents; he was honorable, true, benevolent, upright, and almost

rude, as the most of us are, or are inclined to be. Besides this, he was of strong sense and brave, of undisturbed good-humor, with no excess of wit and intellect, but with a sound, solid understanding. In short, he had not only our virtues in high measure, but also some of our most favorite faults. He was obstinate, self-willed, and crotchety; he wished to reform the world, but wholly after his own notions, and, if possible, also alone, as we all to-day like to do it. Is it, then, a wonder that we find him so fine a fellow, since, in so many points, he is exactly like ourselves?

Some little virtues which he had once can easily forgive him. Youth pardons his love for somewhat arbitrary justice, and sympathizes rightly with his self-reliant character, while older persons forget his violent deeds, because he is one whom the princes hate, and to whom the oppressed turn in their need—a man who is so filled with noble confidence in God, that, when his hand was shot off, he said:

"If I had twelve hands, what would they avail me without Thy grace? Then may I with only one—"

It pleased one that he was ever so ready to drink; another that he never drank alone, but shared the draught with his last servant; that he lived as a free nobleman upon his possessions, and that he despised the greediness, after each fat morsel, of hungry courtiers; in fine, all obsequious fawning upon the nobility.

A further attraction of Götz is especially this, that he expresses national thoughts with a clearness which had, for a long time, been without example in German life. Our heart still to-day warms when we hear his words, spoken a hundred years ago of the princes in opposition to Weislingen:

"Peace and quiet! no doubt! Every bird of prey naturally likes to eat its plunder undisturbed. The general weal! If they would but take the trouble to study that! And they trifle with the emperor shamefully."

He sets before himself the empire and the common welfare as they are personified in the emperor.

This adherence is put to the proof, for the empire can maltreat its noblest sons; nevertheless, here is shown the fidelity of his heart, for he cares more for the destiny of his companions than for his own. The treason against them draws from him, at last, a complaint even against Heaven: "Is this the reward of fidelity, of filial obedience?—'That it may be well with thee, and that thy days may be long in the land!'"

Götz becomes in Goethe's hands a type of the whole German people, in his persistent integrity and trustfulness. When he, in this character, says, "I have been always satisfied with little," one can reply to him, with Sickingen, as to the German people, "And, therefore, that little has always been denied thee."

The artist has confined himself, in his picture, to the historic Götz, as he has been lately given to us in contem-

poraneous representations, and to portraits in the biography composed by one of his descendants. The hill Jaxthausen, in the background, is taken from old drawings.

Although the poet makes him to have perished in the Peasants' War, yet the historical Götz, much as his character seems to correspond throughout to the hero of Goethe, lived more than forty years after, as is well known, and changed from a youthful brawler and soldier into an industrious cultivator of the land, who had friendly relations with the citizens of Heilbronn, formerly so hostile to him. In this second peaceful portion of his life he is not less interesting than in the earlier warlike period.



ELISABETH.

(*Götz von Berlichingen.*)

"Whom God loves, to him He gives a brave wife," said the warlike Knight of Berlichingen, with so deep a conviction of the bravery of his own, that we cannot avoid responding amen, and recognizing thankfully that he would find still to-day in Germany many enjoying this good fortune who scarcely deserve it as well as he. When he calls the Lady Elisabeth brave, he touches her special peculiarity, for she is so, through and through. It is a German national virtue, which one finds to-day almost as common among women as among men; and which compensates for much that is rude, clownish, and ugly, in German character.

Misfortunes seldom come singly; so also very rarely does one virtue stand alone, and to this noble quality in Götz's wife belong others, which are all of the same family. Plain, strong, diligent, domestic, she makes no complaints about her nerves, and plays no piano-forte. Of romances and novels she seems to know little, and, like

him who boasted of his cousin who played the flute, she could proudly say that her sentimental sister-in-law had read the "Theurdank." There are, alas! no well-grounded indications existing that Lady Gotz ever enjoyed in her education the benefit of a Genevan *bonne,* and learned to chatter in French, good or bad, before she knew German; or that she had mispronounced the name Berlichingen in this language, so dear to our German nobility of to-day; but, in lieu thereof, she cooks for Götz returning home, with her own hands, turnips and lamb, as the wise Charles, the "Enfant Terrible," betrays to us, who certainly had no suspicion that such an occupation was degrading to a high-born lady.

Happily there is good ground for believing that Lady Götz's Sunday robe of brocade came from some shopkeeper of Nuremburg or Cologne, without any demand for payment; and in this respect, at least, there is some approach to modern aristocratic traditions, and the more that we hear her say upon Götz's arrival home, "There he comes, with booty."

There is no sun without a spot, and so we find Lady Götz giving thanks to God that He had made her of a sterner disposition than her sister-in-law, while our court-ladies cannot boast too much of the softness of their hearts, and agree with her only in this, that they are not accustomed to disquiet themselves greatly if their spouses remain longer absent than they said at their departure. We must add, there is much that leads us

to the supposition that the gracious lady of Jaxthausen was a little sharp at times, wholly unlike that beautiful countess who, because of her white arms, became then the founder of the family of Katzenellenbogen, as also to those graces of to-day, with whom our gallantry would not limit itself to a comparison of the elbows.

In like manner, Lady Götz had plainly nothing of that fascinating *esprit* which thrives the best amidst the aromatic odors of the hissing tea or coffee urn, and which, with fine dialectics, can make white black, and black white. On the contrary, she has merely that simple, sharp, logical, and sound understanding that can never consent to call black either gray or green, or any thing but black; she hates or loves with the energy of a positive nature, and says to her refining sister-in-law, who would excuse Weislingen's treason—

"Tell me, how can a man ever have been good who lays snares for his best and truest friend?"

She has, therefore, no claim to be called interesting or piquant; for it is in such characters the element of uncertainty which gives them their charm; but, in her case, we know well what she will do under all circumstances. Her character is a unity without flaws and without contradictions; she never speaks of her affections, nor occupies herself so anxiously, incessantly, and exclusively, with the condition of her heart, as is the present feminine fashion—a great omission, which certainly deserves to be blamed.

Perhaps it may compensate in a certain degree for this crying defect, that one feels with her every word, if he does not plainly see it, that she will remain true to her husband in misery and death, his honored counsellor in prosperity, and his never-failing consoler in every calamity.

It is the necessary consequence, the unavoidable result of all culture, that it must lead not only to refinement, but also to deterioration and corruption, if it is not confirmed and rejuvenated by art. It is art that gives us new ideals of health and soundness, of original and undesecrated relations and persons; and thereby purifies our moral conceptions, stained with the defilements of the day. In Götz and his wife, Goethe has given us such an ideal of a married pair, and has thus wrought much more good than his picture of the wife alone could have done, however admirable her picture might have been. And, when she shall have long been forgotten, this ideal will live and work in all hearts, for the relation of husband and wife has never been more beautifully described.

In the simple expressions in which this married pair speak of one another, lies a deep warmth, which it touches us to think of. They not only love one another, they also honor each other; for love demands devotion, but honor demands a strict self-control, even with the most upright intentions.

Goethe tells us that, in Lady Götz, we have the living image of his mother, and we can readily believe that the

amiable and capable counsellor's lady sat in many points for the portrait. The Lady Elisabeth has so strong an individual impress, that the artist could never have depicted her without a living embodiment before him; and who unites better the qualities necessary to make a stout German housewife, with an attractive grace, than the bright, calm, resolute, healthy mother of the poet?





MARIA.

(*Götz von Berlichingen.*)

"Maria is beautiful and amiable, and a prisoner or an invalid might easily fall in love with her. Her eyes beamed with compassion and melancholy sympathy," said Francis, of Götz's amiable and gentle sister. "Were I married to a man who continually incurred such danger, I should die within the first year," she herself says. And she adds: "Charles, it is far better to live at home in your castle, like a quiet Christian knight. One may find opportunities enough of doing good on one's own lands. Even the worthiest knights do more harm than good in their excursions." Thus she speaks to the little son of her heroic brother, whom she was teaching to love home ways and books. Mademoiselle Maria is by nature sober and sensible, and a very little sentimental withal, and is on that account in direct contrast with Götz and his wife, who, with all their strict probity, are full of the spirit of wild romantic poesy, a spirit which Maria is so far unable to appreciate, that she thus ex-

presses herself respecting her brother, so deeply injured by Weislingen, "My brother is highly incensed, and so are you. I am only a spectator in the matter, and can be more impartial."

Having naturally a certain coolness of temperament, if her character had not such a peculiar purity and cloister-like severity, she would be in danger of becoming a little tedious. While she says to Weislingen that she hopes to make him happy, she refuses, nevertheless, in spite of her love, that he should caress her, and says to him, "I have been taught that caresses are like fetters, strong through their union, and that maidens when they love are weaker than Samson after the loss of his locks."

She has in her whole figure something of a saint, after the old German fashion, tall in stature, and of blond complexion. Without doubt she possesses that which is wanting to most women, however brilliant their intellectual gifts—it is reason, but reason schooled in a cloister. Her mind has nothing remarkable about it, a few quiet caprices excepted. It is this very absence of fancy and embellishment in Maria's character, and the presence of so much that is genuine and solid, that make it so easy for her to win natures like that of Weislingen, which, on the other hand, are rich in intellect—active, courtly, and elegant—but morally weak; and as easy also to lose them. The inexperienced are always led away by beauty of form, for it is natural and pardonable

to believe that the mind and heart are in harmony with it. We cannot, certainly, blame Maria for her love, for it is easily explained through her inexperience, and Sickingen said very truly: "Should the poor girl be caged in a cloister, because the first man who gained her love proved a villain?" He knows her feelings: "The poor maiden passes her life in lamentation and prayer," and he is too good a man of the world not to understand that this must become truly wearisome to young maidens, and well calculated to produce that disposition in which they are prepared to accept him who addresses them in a frank and manly way, and whose qualities are in contrast with those which had pleased them in the faithless one, for, if their characters were alike, this would only awaken mistrust. It is this scene of Sickingen's wooing that the artist has chosen for his representation of Maria, the moment which he describes with such delightful humor:

"All goes as I wish. She was somewhat startled at my proposal, and looked at me from head to foot; I'll wager she was comparing me with her gallant. Thank Heaven! I can stand the scrutiny. She answered little and confusedly; so much the better, let it work for a time, a proposal of marriage does not come amiss after such a cruel disappointment."

And so it was. Women like Maria are deceived but once; then they choose carefully. In the instant when they again take hope, even if they continue sad, they become again rich in love.

Modest in her wishes, Maria loves more than all that

which is familiar, and is naturally full of affection. Where can this affection be better bestowed than upon a brother whom she reverences, and to whom she is for that very reason more devoted; she will not forsake him in his need, but, that she also is proud of her husband only an hour after the wedding, we see from her words:

"I cannot leave you, sister. Dear brother, let us stay. Dost thou value my husband so little as to refuse his help in thy extremity?"

She yields only when she sees that her brother expects his deliverance from him, and then leaves the castle with her spouse.

We meet her but twice more, once at the death-bed of Weislingen, whither she hastened to beseech him to spare the life of Götz, a request which it must have been as hard for her to make to one who had so grievously injured her, as the sight of her must have been painful to him. The misery of him she had once loved recalls to memory how dear he had been; his appearance affects her heart, and she forgives him and prays to Heaven to have mercy upon him. It is the happy prerogative of women of high moral character to be always merciful, and of this Maria here offers a distinguished example.

The second time we meet her, when having obtained from Weislingen the freedom of Götz, she finds the latter on his death-bed. It seems as if all things were giving way around her, for her husband also is surrounded and

besieged. Nevertheless, she thinks more upon the unfortunate Weislingen, and on her dying brother, than on him; for to herself she gives no thought at all, and thus expresses her true womanly character, of which devotion and self-sacrifice are indispensable qualities.



Fr. Pecht del. A. Schadelbauer sculp.

Franz von Lichtenfels



FRANZ VON SICKINGEN.

(*Götz von Berlichingen.*)

We see in personified Götz the mediæval German chivalry, holding fast to its traditions of bold independence, and striving against a new age and the just desire for legal order. In his downfall, in spite of all his great personal activity, we see how the law, when administered with energy, triumphs over an old system. Götz himself is, therefore, a truly tragic figure, because, with his opinions, he is never able to bring himself in accord with the new age, and in his solitary opposition is necessarily overpowered.

As regards his brother-in-law, Sickingen, the case is by no means so simple. The latter comprehended well the new period; he is rather a statesman and politician than a mere knight, as Götz. He is an ambitious man, who, in the strife of the old with the new, will, with strong hand, elevate himself, while, at the same time, he presents himself as the representative of the interests of a whole class, which, if it accept him as leader, may yet

have a noble future. In our drama, in which Sickingen plays but a secondary part, it is very cursorily but very clearly intimated that he is the intellectual leader in the strife of the knights against the power of the princes, as, on the other hand, Götz is presented as its most avowed and most interested representative.

If the latter is preëminently simple and brave, so especially appears in Sickingen, in addition to these virtues, the proud, masculine self-consciousness of his intellectual superiority. Götz is more of a soldier than he—a game-cock, who more than all else loves fighting. Sickingen is wholly a commander; he merely sends his troopers. The lordly, the ambitious, the grasping element in his nature never denies itself. The feeling of superiority gives him a confidence in demeanor, which in his courtship of Maria puts him in a remarkably striking contrast with the sentimental Weislingen. How quietly do we hear him say: "Do you think I cannot efface the recollection of such a wretch?" A weaker man would have been disheartened when told, "The poor maiden passes her life in lamentation and prayer;" but he says, "It is to the honor of you both to have been deceived by him." Herein he shows, not only a noble way of thinking, but also the firm consciousness that, in the relative importance of their union, he is the figure and she is the cipher, even though capable, through her union to him, of increasing his happiness tenfold. When he presented his proposition, he seems

to have been contented with rather a cold reception, and expresses no doubt as to his success, but says, in recalling to mind the handsome Weislingen:

"I'll wager she was comparing me with her gallant. Thank Heaven! I can stand the scrutiny."

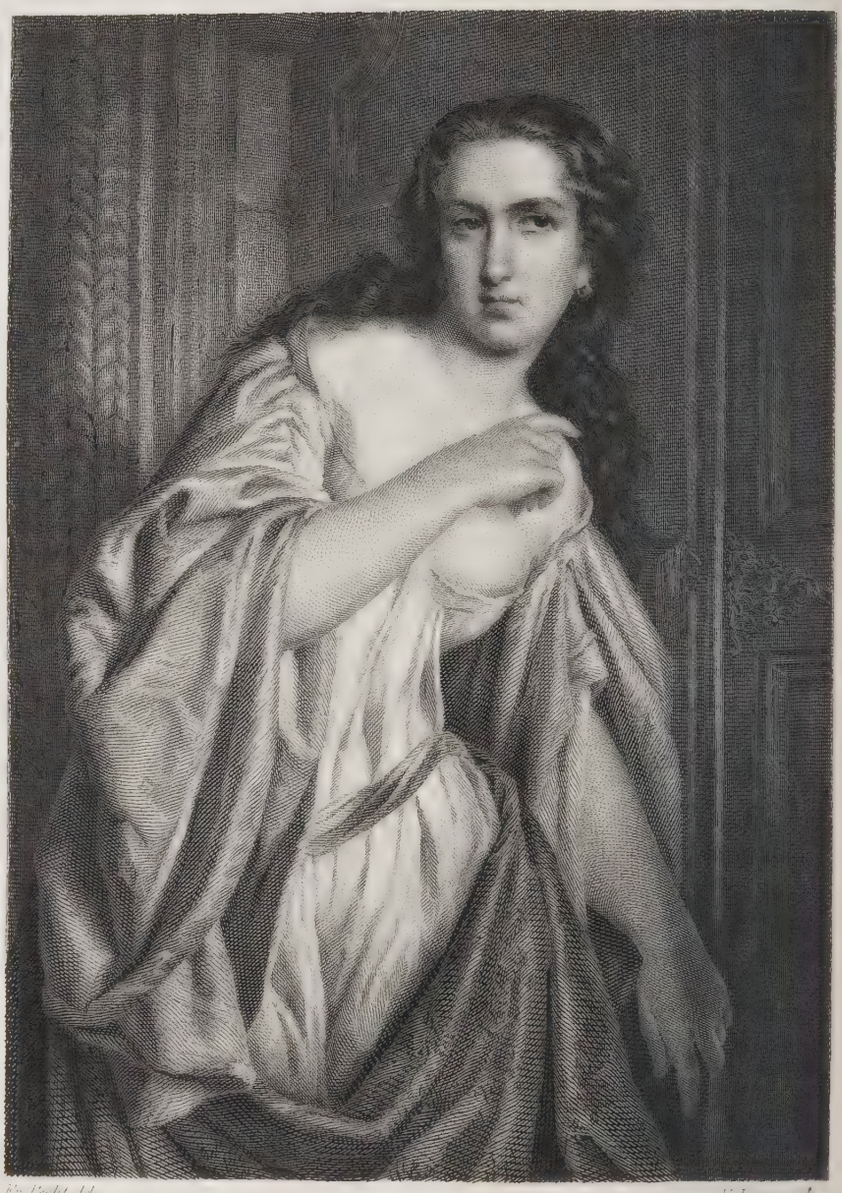
It is in this scene, where Sickingen appears as a wooer, that the artist has pictured him, and has confined himself to the only seemingly authentic likeness that exists of him—a copperplate engraving of about that time, where the thick-set, powerful, defiant figure, as well as the sly, bold glance, the strong self-consciousness manifested in the under-lip, the firm chin, jaw-bones solid as those of a beast of prey, fit admirably to the character, as Goethe, with the true eye and the fine instinct of the artist for that which is true to nature, has comprehended it, scanty as were the historical sources which were then at his command, respecting this pride of the Franconian knights. Possibly, indeed probably, he knew the country, and so comprehended the character. We are often disposed to think that, in this whole part, he has borrowed the glorious natural coloring, in all its freshness, from the figures of Durer and Holbein, which he had learned to know in Dresden and in the Rhine country, where their pictures abound, and which seem to have contributed much more to his understanding of the character, and to have determined his comprehension of it, than all the scanty and rough

writings of that time. One should not forget that the literature of that day had as little produced a poet to be ranked with Durer and Holbein, as our present German painting hitherto has been able, even in its most distinguished representatives, to produce any one comparable to Goethe or Schiller.

Whether his proud self-confidence did not deceive Sickingen in his wooing of Maria, is left by the poet undecided; we learn only that he obtained her hand. Whether he also obtained her heart, which had little appreciation of what was great, remains more than doubtful; and the circumstance that she wishes to continue with Weislingen in his last hours, makes it more improbable, although it is certain that her noble mind prompted her thereto, and with women the impulse of the moment is stronger than with men. The heart of a woman is a wonderful thing, and very little influenced by any considerations of reason; it prefers there to abide where it has to suffer, and not where it is quietly esteemed and cherished; it wishes to be dazzled, and not convinced; it loves illusion, not reality; but, before all things, it must be occupied. That the ambitious Sickingen, busy with his hundred plans, should have made his wife his confidante, and have deeply interested her in them as in himself, would do violence to her whole nature, which, in its narrowness and absence of all ambition, was little fitted to coöperate with him, or even to understand him. Besides this, he knew well that what

one would have kept silent, he must not prattle about; also, her soft, quiet character, that he would not disturb; her longing after calm, peaceful happiness, would withhold him from the free communication of his purposes. For Maria, as for most women, the family is all, and the world nothing; the former alone interests them deeply—the world presents only persons, and they understand it only through the medium of domestic life. That she scarce ever mentions the deeds of her husband, does not confirm the view that she actively coöperated with him and shared his spirit.

In the earlier works of our poet, the epic rather than the dramatic feature plainly appears, the peculiarity of which consisted in this: that it delineated characters with a few masterly strokes and full of life, but gave them afterward no growth. That they should continue, even now, to exercise so great an attraction over us, is not due wholly to the vivid portraiture which compels our attention, but also to the fine contrasts which exist among them. May it not be that the three female characters in "Götz," and he himself, Sickingen, and Weislingen, are so drawn that the peculiarities of each are, through their relations to the others, brought into the clearest and boldest relief?"



Chr. Vecht del.

V. Bovenschen sculp.



ADELAIDE.

(*Götz von Berlichingen.*)

There is a kind of women, as we know, who practise upon men the same demoniac power of attraction as rattle-snakes upon little birds. Certainly, they practise it only upon weak men; to one of real strength, is the most fascinating woman seldom long dangerous. This demoniac nature Adelaide shows in the highest degree; she is destructive to every one who approaches her; she infuses poison into the heart. But this poison is not of one element; it is compounded of many ingredients, and some of these are high and noble. Let us attempt to analyze this mingling of elements in her character. First of all, she is dazzlingly, intoxicatingly beautiful. Francis says of her beauty:

"You have heard much of it? You might as well say, I have seen music—the last time I was in her company I had no more command over my senses than if I had been drunk, or, I may rather say, I felt like a glorified saint, enjoying the angelic vision; all my senses exalted, more lively and more perfect than ever, yet not one at its owner's command. Her eye was fixed upon the board as

if meditating a bold move; traces of attentive intelligence surround the mouth and cheek; the mixture of dignity and feeling is on her brow, and the dazzling lustre of her face and neck is heightened by her raven tresses."

Together with her beauty, she has a lofty spirit, quick understanding, and is a graceful coquette, but also trickish, cunning, and of a grasping disposition. With this is a strong temperament, in the highest degree excited through a brief wedlock; all this is certainly enough to produce an atmosphere which a simple nature like that of Francis could not breathe without intoxication; for to him she seems as "*fire, life, courage.*" We have the intellectual and the sensuous in their highest development; but, on the contrary, of feeling, love, devotion, there is scarce a trace. Under these circumstances, she can hardly fail to be highly ambitious, since only in this way can she find compensation for that joy of heart which she has forever lost.

But it is the destiny of women that, in such case, they are compelled to adapt themselves to the inclinations of men, if they would use them as their instruments, and hence they must necessarily more and more corrupt and humiliate themselves, since the means which they employ must become more and more stimulating, and so from the finest coquetry the path gradually descends to the most shameless provocation. This is, perhaps, not the weakest argument which one can cite for the view that women should seek their rule within the domestic circle, and not in the confusion of the world.

Adelaide is still no criminal when she first meets us; she has only trodden the first step of the dangerous ladder; but ambitious women, and to a certain extent all are such, are attracted by nothing so much as by the fame of a man; that he pleases others, that he is admired by others, is, in itself, ground enough to wish to attract him.

Thus Adelaide says of Weislingen: "I love him not, and nevertheless I will that he remain." She speaks half in derision of his "meek soul," for she has already prepared to undervalue him, so soon as she sees she can control him at her pleasure. It is a peculiarity of women that they always seek to rule men, and, if they succeed, thoroughly despise them; for really they wish to be ruled, and every attempt to the contrary is only the proof whether a man has the spirit to do this. Brunhilde gives herself only to the strong one, to him who compels her, and this is a play that will be played so long as the world stands; the worst of the matter is, that Brunhilde begins ever anew, so soon as the slightest doubt comes over her.

Since Adelaide was successful in detaining Weislingen with the bishop, he was already lost; had he remained true to his word, and gone in spite of her enticements, she would, perhaps, have hated him, but certainly feared and esteemed him. She confesses to him, with great freedom, that she is weary of his company, that Weislingen pleases her no more, but merely the handsome man;

she depicts to him her condition with a frankness which wins our esteem:

"For my part, I do not care to scrutinize the character of those whom I esteem; so we lived on for some time. I felt there was a deficiency in you, but knew not what I missed; at length my eyes were opened. I saw, instead of the energetic being who gave impulse to the affairs of a kingdom, and was ever alive to the voice of fame, who was wont to pile princely project on project till, like the mountains of the Titans, they reached the clouds—instead of all this, I saw a man as querulous as a love-sick poet, as melancholy as a slighted damsel, and more indolent than an old bachelor. I first ascribed it to your misfortune, which still lay at your heart, and excused you as well as I could, but, now that it daily becomes worse, you must really forgive me, if I withdraw my favor from you; you possess it unjustly; I bestowed it for life on a hero, who cannot transfer it to you."

Is not this well merited? Had she, nevertheless, so much inclination for him that she might take him for her husband?

That she was not successful embitters her only the more, awakens all the demons in her bosom, for it is a disgrace to her taste, which she would avenge on the whole sex. Deceived in the dearest hope of a woman, in her faith in the capacity of men, who appear to her always in a despicable form, without conscience or sense of duty, she seeks at last, in this deceptive world, a true sensation, and the warm, genuine passion of Francis inspires her at least with a momentary sympathy. She needs an instrument; the price she must pay to gain him appears so little, and thus the step from fault to crime is taken. But now there is no more reserve, for she has

lost her self-respect, she has no love for others, ambition alone remains to her. The wish is father to the thought; Weislingen is in the way; the instrument for his removal is at hand—she has simply to will it. Can she stand here? She will. It is in this moment that the artist has delineated her, when she hears Francis come in the night, and opens the door, to offer to him the highest reward for the commission of a crime which a woman can pay. The demon in her is thoroughly aroused; the snake-like, untamable wildness of her nature breaks forth; all that is great and strong in her is turned to poison. She who was once an angel has now truly become a devil.

Natural disposition is not enough, it forms simply the warp; the woof to the completed tissue is destiny—the destiny which permitted Adelaide to know only weak men.





LOTTE.

(*Sorrows of Werter.*)

If we, in the course of our accompanying observations, have at every opportunity expressed our great admiration of the artistic mastery with which Goethe is able to describe the most manifold female characters, we must honestly confess, nevertheless, that we are not able to do this in regard to one of the most famous of the same, the world-renowned judge's daughter, who was destined through her charms to occasion so much unhappiness.

At the risk of being considered unimaginative and dry, we must confess that she has ever been to us a mere abstraction, although we have known her for more than thirty years. Since this work has given us the opportunity to renew this acquaintance, and yet we have not been able to form a living image of her, we have had recourse to the authentic picture of that Lotte Kestner who was the source of Goethe's inspiration, and we now comprehend at least how he could

leave it to Werter to kill himself on her account, and content himself, as he comically narrates it, with "a scratch of the skin."

In the mean time, we found it easier to put together those features, as Werter described them, and saw "a lady of middle height with a lovely figure, dressed in a robe of simple white, trimmed with pink ribbons." We began to comprehend it when he says:

"How steadfastly I gazed upon her rich, dark eyes during these remarks; how my very soul gloated over her warm lips, and fresh, glowing cheeks; how I became lost in the delightful meaning of her words, to such a degree that I scarcely heard the actual expressions!"

We believe that this is usually the case with most lovers. Indeed, when he continues as follows, one is greatly inclined to take him at his word:

"You should see Lotte dance. She dances with her whole heart and soul; her figure is all harmony, elegance, and grace, as if she were conscious of nothing else, and had no other thought or feeling; and doubtless, for the moment, every other sensation is extinct."

We can also easily understand her when she says:

"When I was younger, I loved nothing so much as romances; nothing could equal my delight when, on some holiday, I could settle down quietly in a corner, and enter with my whole heart and soul into the joys or sorrows of some fictitious Leonora."

That one should become crazy about this girl so fond of dancing and of romances, but in other respects sound-minded, domestic, staid, and provincial in appearance

and manners, this we cannot well comprehend. But when Werter boasts of her—

"So much simplicity with so much understanding, so much goodness with so much firmness, and so much repose of soul with so much of life and activity—"

we attain by degrees to the image of a sound, clear, modest, rich nature, rather unpretending than dazzling; and it is therefore very natural that the artist should represent her as such in the scene of the thunder-storm after the ball, as Werter thus describes it:

"It still thundered at a distance; a soft rain was pouring down over the country, and filled the air around us with delicious odors. Charlotte leaned forward upon her arm; her eyes wandered over the scene; she raised them to heaven, and then turned them upon me; they were moistened with tears."

If, therefore, we bring all these single features together, we can form a living image of Lotte as she was. Indeed, we believe that we are now able to understand that instinctive genius which taught the poet to use the active, not in the least enthusiastic, but thoroughly sensible character of Lotte, in order, through it, to make more prominent the sickly, excitable, sentimental, half-melancholy, half-fanatical elements in Werter's spoiled nature. Her fresh womanliness formed so much a sharper contrast to his unmanliness. By his side she appears simply sensible, but the faithful performance of duty is rather insipid, and it is more interesting to tread it under foot with ingenious sophisms, in theory and in practice, as does Werter.

Contrasted with him, how wholly unlike appears the commonplace Lotte, who is not at all impulsive, but has a strong feeling of obligation, so that one can say of her:

"How since that time a new spirit had taken possession of her, how in care and anxiety for their welfare she became a real mother to them, how every moment of her time was devoted to some labor of love in their behalf, and yet her mirth and cheerfulness had never forsaken her."

Certainly this healthfulness of character would make upon a man like Werter the deepest impression. The sick does not love again the sick, but, on the contrary, is drawn strongly toward the healthful, although he may not rightly know why. In like manner, it is the peculiarity of all spiritual sicknesses, that they make us lose all perception of the reality of things; as Werter expresses himself:

"I am amused with these puppets, or rather I am myself one of them; but when I sometimes grasp my neighbor's hand, I feel that it is not natural, and I withdraw mine with a shudder."

Lotte, however, never lost her self-possession; and though, like most women, who, with all their enthusiasm, love a little coquetry, she yielded for a time to this temptation, yet did she soon recover the even balance of her mind. Werter, indeed, reproached her as unfeeling:

"She does not feel, she does not know, that she is preparing a poison which will destroy us both."

This is the reproach of a sick man. Much truer is it, when we hear it later said of her:

"It is certain that she had formed a determination to keep Werter at a distance by every means in her power."

And when she says to him—

"Why must you love me—me only, who belong to another? I fear, I much fear, that it is only the impossibility of possessing me, which makes your desire for me so strong—"

we have good ground to congratulate her upon the possession of such a solid understanding, and we find it intelligible how, urged on by the impetuous passion of a man so highly gifted and esteemed, she should for a moment waver and forget herself.

"She had been accustomed to communicate to him every thought and feeling which interested her, and his absence threatened to open a void in her existence which it might be impossible to fill. How heartily she wished that she might convert him into a brother!"

Nothing is so infectious as folly, and we cannot find fault with her, that she for a moment wavered, since she immediately resolved to fulfil her duty, and calls to him!

"It is the last time, Werter; you shall never see me more!"

To have remained indifferent, would have proved her without feeling. A victory which costs no struggle is without merit; we may, therefore, well esteem that which she won over herself—the more highly in proportion to the struggle which it cost her.





WERTER.

(*Sorrows of Werter.*)

If it is a true sign of genius that it is able in a single work to reflect the whole intellectual and moral conformation of its time, then "Werter," like "The Robbers" of Schiller, belongs, beyond dispute, to those works of art which mark the boundary-lines of a distinct mental epoch.

Few books have ever so dazzled and inflamed the public mind as this, whose hero we are about to describe. Even to-day, if one does not throw it away before he has read the first ten pages, it has an almost spasmodic power over us. With wild joy it opens to us the abysses of the human heart, which in ordinary life we scarcely notice, and the spectacle stirs our blood to fever-heat. But it has no elevating and satisfying influence over us; on the contrary, it oppresses us; it makes us dizzy and distempered. We must call it sad, but it is not in the least tragic. Tragedy demands a hero, some great cause which conquers or is conquered, and whose leaders

are heroic; a Posa who would free the world, a Faust who would fathom the profoundest problems of being, are tragic figures. God forbid that such weaklings as Werter, who, for a maiden's sake, put a bullet through his brains, should, therefore, be regarded as a true hero of tragedy, as was actually the case at the time! Germany, or rather Europe, which was so stirred up by the appearance of "Werter," was in a morbid and unhealthful condition, and the power which the book had is only a proof of its distempered state.

Long periods of peace, like that in which "Werter" appeared, have always a weakening influence upon men's minds. If they minister to humanity, they develop also egotism, mawkish tenderness, love of pleasure, and false susceptibility. It was, then, unavoidable that leading minds should look upon nature as the exact opposite to this culture, that Schiller should find his "Charles Moor" among robbers, that Goethe should make "Werter" to occupy himself with his own feelings, since more attractive occupation the imperial chamber in Wetzlar offered not. It is apparent that these works must have been often misunderstood. Carried away by the power of description, one forgot that both the great poets very justly brought their heroes to a miserable fate. The charm of poesy which surrounded them made them, nevertheless, the ideals of those who were infected by the spirit of the time, from which the poet himself was free. "Werter" was received with passionate delight by those who did

not understand it, which vexed no one more than the author himself.

To-day we find it very different. We know that the individual is only part of a whole, to whose good he must devote himself, and can be healthful only as he discharges this duty. Goethe recognized this clearly, for the first thing which he does is to show us distinctly how Werter neglected this duty, how he was unaffected by great interests, how he was never able to subordinate himself to them, how selfishly and pusillanimously he shrunk back from all contact with the world, and how, in general, he was unwilling to do any thing else than to shell peas in his landlady's garden. But what a man can do, is the measure of his value. To live artistically, beautifully, which at that time was so greatly desired, is the object of women. While our first duty should be, not to think of ourselves, but to adapt ourselves to others, we hear Werter say:

"Solitude is a genial balsam to my mind."

He cajoles himself after the following fashion:

"Often do I strive to allay the burning fever of my blood, and you have never witnessed any thing so unsteady as, so uncertain as, my heart. I treat my poor heart like a sick child."

In this agreeable occupation of self-inspection, in this purposeless dreaming, which as well befits a young maiden as it is unfitting a man, has the artist represented him, reading Homer as he lies by the fountain:

"In the front of the house is a fountain—a fountain to which I am bound by a charm, like Melusina and her sisters. Descending a gentle slope, you come to an arch, where, some twenty steps lower down, water of the clearest crystal gushes from the marble rock. The narrow wall which encloses it above, the tall trees which encircle the spot, and the coolness of the place itself, every thing imparts a pleasant but sublime impression. Not a day passes that I do not spend an hour there."

The artist naturally seeks to make prominent that which is weak, sentimental, enthusiastic, in his character; thinks of him as a blonde and with fresh color, with hands never disfigured by rude labor, although Werter himself sometimes feels reproaches of conscience therefor:

"I cannot forget that so many other qualities lie dormant within me, which moulder uselessly, and which I am obliged to keep carefully concealed. Ah! this thought affects my spirits fearfully. And yet to be misunderstood is the fate of us all."

In such cases, one is accustomed to consider life from a very elevated stand-point:

"The human race is but a monotonous affair—most of them labor the greater part of their time for mere subsistence, and the small portion of freedom which remains unemployed so troubles them that they use every exertion to get rid of it."

In general, one is never more inclined to regard humanity, with its strifes, *en bagatelle*, than when he himself has very little desire to do any thing sensible, but gives himself up to some favorite folly. One of the best makeshifts, when one properly has little cause to be satisfied with himself, is to look upon the world as too

unimportant to be the object of his activity, and upon himself as a misapprehended genius. But the notion which such characters have of genius is very strange. Werter describes it admirably when he says:

"Oh, my friends, why is it that the torrent of genius so seldom bursts forth, so seldom rolls in full-flowing stream, overwhelming your wondering soul? Because on either side of this stream, cold, and respectable persons have taken up their abodes, and, forsooth, their summer-houses and tulip-beds would suffer from the torrent; wherefore, they dig trenches and raise embankments betimes, in order to avert the impending danger."

To him genius is only a destructive and arbitrary force; while, in fact, it alone fructifies, sets in order—indeed, is itself law.

If one in his lofty egotism has persuaded himself of the wretchedness and unworthiness of all earthly strivings, nothing is more natural than that, in the emptiness of his soul, that feeling should get the mastery, which, in the soul of the active man, holds but a secondary place. For a Werter, that love becomes a curse which to another man is a blessing. Overpowered by it, he says:

"Since that time, sun, moon, and stars, may pursue their course; I know not whether it is day or night; the whole world is nothing to me."

This continues to be his favorite mode of speech, to which he clings with the obstinacy of a weak character, until it leads him to destruction. The manner in which this gradual, inevitable destruction is described, testifies of a skill and power which, in our prose writings, have never been equalled. One feels himself engulfed in the whirl-

pool which has drawn in the unfortunate man, and whirls him around in ever-narrowing circles, until he sinks before our eyes.

In breathless excitement, we see him as he reaches after any hand, any object which the world may hold out to him, to deliver himself, but, borne on by a resistless force, finds nothing to save him, and, at last, lies bleeding at our feet. We separate from him with that shuddering which is the stronger the more amiable and interesting he is, upon whom this incurable disease fastens, whose first unmarked beginnings, as well as its finished results, are so powerfully described by the Poet.





CLAVIGO.

(*Clavigo.*)

Most men fail of success in life, not so much because they go in a wrong direction, as because they do not persistently follow the course they have marked out. It is much seldomer the perverse will that brings misfortune, than the will weak and wavering.

Very frequently does the old fable repeat itself of the earthen and the iron pots which floated down the stream together. As their contact cost the earthen one its life, so did the true and genuine friendship of Carlos bring destruction to Clavigo; and the well-meant protection of her brother, the like fate to the amiable Maria.

But, after all, it is the indecision of Clavigo, and the irresoluteness of his character, which are chiefly at fault. He is too conscientious at one time, and too little so at another. He is not, on the one hand, willing to be a courtier and an intriguer, nor, on the other, a mere learned or literary man; in fine, he possesses rather an artistic nature, having strong imaginative faculties, and

a nervous and sanguine temperament. Thus constituted, he is able to possess all, and to enjoy all; but he holds that which he has seized, with a very loose grasp. When Carlos says of him:

"He is at home in all matters; as librarian, he can quickly acquire knowledge very valuable, and be very useful; and, if any change takes place, he becomes minister"—

this is certainly true, but it is, also, only one side of his character. He can certainly accomplish all this, but only to fall early; because there is wanting in him that stern persistency which sacrifices every thing to attain its goal. On the contrary, one can as easily move him from his purpose, as one can twirl a glove. He takes any form at pleasure, but only at the next moment to change it for another. However stern he may appear, he remains ever of very flexible stuff. Shall we, therefore, despise him? This, all our fair readers will do without scruple, and look upon Don Carlos with bitter dislike.

Nevertheless, much may be said in his favor. Clavigo is vain, without doubt; but he is, also, truly amiable; his nature is humane, and capable of strong attachments. If vanity is his ruling motive, and he seeks, first of all, applause—

"This passage is very good; it will charm the women"—

his second thought is ever, also, Maria:

"I loved her truly; she attracted me, and, as I sat at her feet, I vowed to

her that it should always be so; that I would be hers, as soon as I obtained any office, any position."

His thoughts ever come back to her whom he once loved. When he later says of her:

"At the time when Guibert kindly received me into his house, when I was a poor, insignificant youth, and I felt in my heart an unconquerable passion for her, was it from any merit in me? Was it not much more an inward agreement of characters, a secret sympathy of hearts, that she did not remain indifferent, and that I was able, after a time, to flatter myself that I alone occupied her heart?—

"Amidst all the tumult and the illusions of vanity and pride, I have ever kept the memory of those happy days which I spent in quiet at her feet; and, when beautiful prospects were opening before us— Thou didst understand me without a word spoken, as I without a word obtained forgiveness. No, this inner communion of our souls is not ended; it exists still as of old"—

this is not perfectly true. Love remains, but passion is certainly departed; like a flower it has faded away. But can one make it a matter of reproach to him, that he had matured with years? His rich and largely expanding nature had effected this.

If this lively susceptibility, this richness, and the attractive and enthusiastic elements of his nature are very dangerous to women, they are, also, beautiful characteristics in the man; as are, also, his unwearied activity, his brilliant, facile comprehension, his intellectual cleverness, and his genuine love for every thing that is beautiful. If Clavigo is thoroughly human, it is not surely from mere weakness. If he is ambitious, even to the most unsparing egoism, he is not, nevertheless,

purely selfish; he will not only ascend and shine, but he will also be useful to others.

But one will object to us, Are not his perfidy and his cowardice enough to condemn him? Without doubt they would, if he were thus perfidious and cowardly, but it is this which we deny. He is not false and faithless purposely; he says of himself:

"It is wonderful that one, who lifts himself up so high, should, nevertheless, be bound in a corner with linen thread! And do I owe to Maria more than I do to myself? Is it a duty to make myself unhappy because a maiden loves me?"

He attempts continually to justify the matter before himself, but is never therewith successful. He has in all this a very lively conscience, which is so much more to be noted, since all his efforts show his strongly sanguine temperament, and that he for the time is wholly absorbed in what he does, so that, more easily than others, he can forget the past. If he makes to the brother far too large concessions, he does it with the most perfect conviction; for the moment, it becomes real to him how greatly he had erred, he confesses it. A cowardly man would, at the death of Maria, have gone out of the way of the funeral; he, always ruled by the impulse of the moment, puts himself in the way of it, to meet the dagger of the brother:

"Hide yourselves, ye stars! Look not down, ye who have so often beheld the villain, in feelings of the most heartfelt happiness, leave this threshold; through this street float along, in golden dreams, with music and song, and enrapture his maiden, listening at the secret casement, and lingering in trans-

port. And now I fill the house with wailing and sorrow; and this scene of my bliss, with the funeral song!"

And when he perishes by his hand, his only dying care is to deliver this brother. This is, indeed, a characteristic of an originally brave and noble nature.

The artist may well be justified, if he gives to Clavigo wholly noble features, representing him as he appears in the first scene of the play, where he takes upon himself to create a better taste among his countrymen. He has made of him what one calls a *beau garçon*. Effeminate, sensitive, intellectual; not without cunning, and in the highest degree fascinating. He is elegant and distinguished in manner, and, as a parvenu, greatly enjoys luxury, and is not indifferent to it, as is one born to its possession.

The real Clavigo was, certainly, a very different person from him whom Goethe has described; and Beaumarchais and his sister in the play seem to have been still more unlike their actual prototypes. As the matter actually took place, Clavigo acted right in his separation, and his duel with Beaumarchais did not injure the latter, but brought many permanent evils upon himself. But these did not hinder the humane and amiable scholar from speaking often, with great calmness, of the dubious immortality which he had attained in Germany through Goethe, the poet sending him thirty years earlier out of the world than he himself thought it good to go.



Fr. Vivien del.

G. Jacquemot sculp.



MARIA BEAUMARCHAIS.

(*Clavigo.*)

"So long as that lovely, cheerful creature had influence over you, I liked your writings better," said Carlos to Clavigo, and in these few words describes the attractive appearance of the little tripping Frenchwoman, whose figure Goethe has been able to bring before us, clothed with such an incomparable and touching charm.

The thing which most deeply affects us is, that she is not represented to us as splendid or distinguished in intellect, or through any internal or external advantages, but is only a little fragrant flower, which accident hath planted in the narrow pathway, where the foot of the eager traveller up the barren heights must, almost of necessity, crush it.

If Maria is in no way distinguished, yet is she in every respect attractive and interesting. It is not that which she says and does that pleases us so much as the graceful way in which she says and does it. What can be more touching than when she says:

"It seems as if I could shed no more tears, and why tears? It grieves me greatly that I make your life bitter. For, in fact, wherefore should I complain? I have had great joy so long as our old friend still lived. Clavigo's love has given me great joy, perhaps more than mine to him. And now what more, what is it that is laid on me?"

How characteristically lady-like and French it is when she flies from one subject to another, and continually comes back to that which alone really interests her:

"Whether it is so, indeed, that he loves me no more? Ah, why am I not more worthy of love? But he should pity me!

"I saw him, when, at the feet of his new love, he showed all the friendliness, all the humility, with which he had enticed me—I aimed at the heart of the traitor, ah! in a moment was I again the good-hearted French maiden, who had no love-potion, and no dagger for revenge.

"And now why should I not let Clavigo go? If it is the fashion in France, why should it not be in Spain? Why should not a Frenchwoman in Spain be a Frenchwoman? We will discard him and take another; it seems to me that this is the way they do at home."

How charming is it when she, immediately after her reconciliation with Clavigo, thinks of her attire and says:

"I laugh at myself; we maidens are a wonderful people; scarcely do we begin to lift up our heads, than our minds are full of ribbons and ornaments."

It is in this situation that she is presented to us by the artist, who has sought to give not only the attractive appearance, but also her French peculiarities, for French is she, through and through, with her pleasant prattle:

"While he was still Clavigo, and not yet librarian of the king; while he was a stranger, a new-comer, just brought into our house, how amiable was he, how

good! How seemed all his ambition, all his effort, to be the fruit of his love! For my sake he was striving after a name, and rank, and wealth! He has them, and I!—"

But what affects us the most is the feverish pulsation of her blood, the deadly sickness which gnaws at her young life, and which Goethe with such an inimitable mastery has vividly set forth in every word which she utters. We can almost hear her poor heart beat when she says:

"I am a foolish, unhappy maiden! Pain and joy have undermined, with all their power, my poor life. I tell you that I am only half glad that I have him again. I shall little enjoy the happiness that awaited me in his arms, perhaps not at all—"

How despairing is she at one moment, to take in the next new hope!—

"Hope! how oft does this only sweet balm of life delight me! I lose myself in youthful dreams, and see again the loved form of the incomparable one, who is now mine. Oh, Sophia, how charming is he! Since I saw him, how has he developed, I know not how to express it, all those great qualities which before lay concealed through his modesty! He has become a man, and with that consciousness of his powers, which is so wholly without pride or vanity, must he bear away all hearts. And shall he be mine? No, sister, I was not worthy of him, and now am I still less."

How clearly are mirrored, in these words, the boundless devotion to, the right apprehension of, the man of her love. She rightly feels that, in reality, he has become too distinguished, although he loves her truly, to be satisfied with that love which she can offer him, and yet this be-

comes stronger in her own breast the more she is conscious of his superiority.

If Maria is lovely to us, it is as the loveliness of the little bird that warbles ever the song of its love until its bosom breaks. One separates from her with that deep compassion which the cruel indifference of nature so often awakens in us, when it destroys the most lovely, the most beautiful, the most attractive, as unsparingly as the most worthless. Our hearts are touched, but our understanding finds nothing valid to oppose to her unchangeable course. Yesterday was fragrant, enchanting spring—to-day the burning heat of summer scorches us—to-morrow that which is now rosy and blooming is parched and dry. If Maria, without being distinguished by any splendid qualities, is able to attract us so strongly, we find the secret of her attraction, not merely in the thorny crown that encircles her head, and which marks her hard and painful destiny, nor in the grace of her amiable, childlike character, but especially in the lively and glowing expression with which she is invested by the poet. Who can remain unaffected when youth, beauty, amiability, appear before our eyes consecrated to death, and the bitterest grief is united with invincible ill, to lead the sacrifice to the grave? And yet we, from the very beginning, must say that it cannot be otherwise; that under such circumstances it must be so.

Nothing is more natural than that our sympathy with Maria should change into hatred toward Clavigo. But

we do the latter injustice, if we forget that the poet does not leave us in doubt that she would have perished, even if he had not been untrue. The tragic element lies here, in the inexorability of destiny, and not in the guilt of persons, little as this also may be denied or excused, of which Carlos is the most striking example.





BEAUMARCHAIS.

(*Clavigo.*)

It was, without doubt, Goethe's purpose that this play should have an unhappy issue; indeed, that it must have, although no one of the acting personages can be said to have a low or vulgar nature, since it is the opposition of characters which brings about the guilt and misfortune.

This opposition is most clearly brought out in Clavigo and Beaumarchais. They are two men who must, almost of necessity, hate each other, since they live in wholly different worlds of thought and feeling, which is by no means the case with Carlos and Clavigo. To this is to be added that, while the character of Clavigo is refined and flexible, Beaumarchais, on the contrary, is rough and passionate, and has an unconquerable inclination to push every thing to extremes, and compel a quarrel:

"If thou art guilty, expect no forgiveness; to thy misery shall be added the scorn of a brother, and the curse of a father. Art thou innocent? Then vengeance—fiery vengeance, upon the traitor!"

These words, written to his sister, were not fitted to give back quiet of mind to her—the deeply grieving and suffering one—to spare her excitement, and to bring to her consolation and help. He is of a soldier-like nature; his sister calls him fiery, open, brave, boisterous to rudeness, even to cruelty and brutality; brawling and imprudent; but, we must add, noble-minded and trustful. That his strong sense of justice is strangely enough united with a disposition to act arbitrarily, marks him as a military man. His bravery is truly French, mingled with much of demonstration and self-complacence. All this is described to us by the poet in an incomparable way, and he presents to us a figure full of life, which, in its freshness and soldier-like sturdiness, wins every heart, and, even through its very impetuosity, makes friends. The man may be compared to a flask of champagne, which is ever threatening to force out the cork and to flow over, foaming and fizzing.

He will remain a lasting ideal for lieutenants and students. How exquisite is the way in which, falling in with Clavigo, he begins with malicious flatteries, in order to end with the most offensive bullying!

The position of Clavigo, in relation to this brother, is certainly unhappy enough, and must paralyze all ordinary energy. He says himself, very rightly:

"It is a frightful condition into which thy folly, thy perfidy, has cast thee. (He seizes a dagger which lies upon the table.) Ha! a short and good relief! —And is there no other way than death, or murder? Horrible murder? To

rob that unhappy maiden of her last consolation, of her only help, of her brother! To see the blood of the brave, noble man!—and so to take upon thee the curse, double and unbearable, of a family ruined by thee!"

The boldest man does not willingly bear this. Carlos also expresses the same, in a less flattering manner:

"Who will venture his life against such a romantic fool?"

If he then continues—

"To let thyself be so befooled! Dost thou not see that it is a silly, devised plan, to trap thee?

"No, good friend, do not take it evil of me. I have, indeed, seen in a comedy that one has thus cheated a country squire!"—

he is certainly wrong and caricatures; for, with all this, Beaumarchais has, in reality, nothing to do. Cunningly-devised plans are not to his taste; he will, before all, have satisfaction, vengeance. His impetuous nature troubles itself very little respecting contrivances for redress; he gives no thought to them.

It is on this account that he is so surprised when an outlet seems to open before him; if it were not natural for him to spring from one extreme of feeling to another, he would scarcely have said—

"From the heart, then. If I say this to you, still I cannot love you. Herewith are you ours, and let all be forgotten! The paper that you gave me—here it is."

To the very person to whom he had declared, with all openness, that he held him for a poor scoundrel, he

gives, immediately after, a proof of the greatest confidence. This is one of the finest traits in the poet's portraiture of him. His frankness is so great that Maria, who had learned to know him, can say of him:

"Ah! I have seen thy face only a little while, but already it expresses to me all thy feelings. I read every emotion of thy undissembling, uncorrupted soul, upon thy forehead. Thou hast something that makes thee astonished. Speak, what is it?"

So much the more unbounded is his wrath when he sees himself deceived:

"By this throbbing, anxious heart, I take my oath. Hear me, Thou righteous God! Hear me, all His holy angels! Thou shalt be avenged, if he—my heart shudders at the thought—if he draws back, if he is guilty of such a double perjury, and mock at our misery."

How great his anger, is shown distinctly in this, that it does not quicken his mental activity, but, on the contrary, benumbs him:

"All is as dark, as dead in my soul, as if a thunder-bolt had stricken me. Maria, Maria, thou art betrayed! And I stand here! Whither? what? I see nothing, no way of escape, no deliverance."

All that he has effected is the death of his sister—the breaking of that poor heart that, between the goal of her inclination and of his fury, sees no other outlet than death, since her present friends, as well as the unfaithful, are equally putting her to the torture.

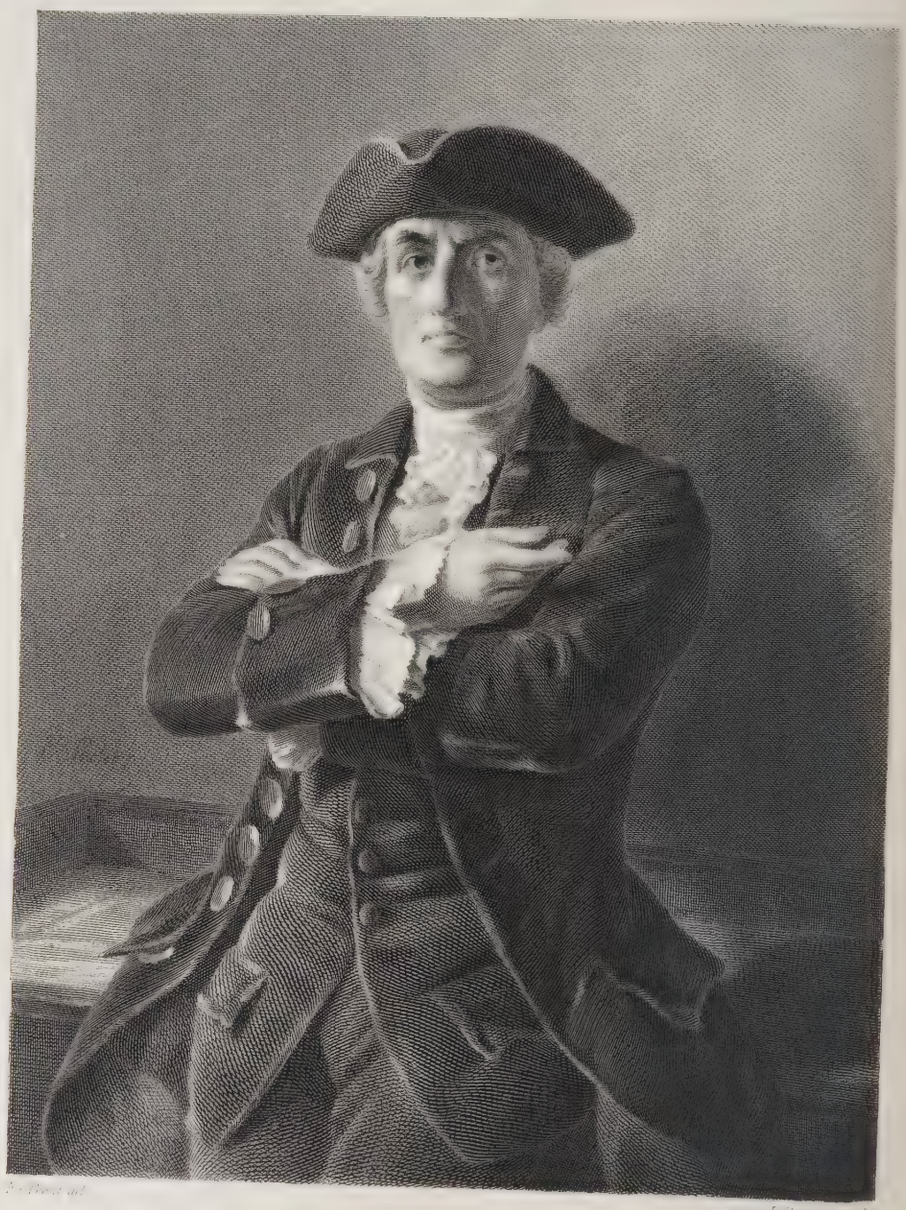
It is wholly correspondent to a magnanimous nature like that of Beaumarchais, that, after he had satisfied

his vengeance in the blood of his enemy, he is inclined wholly to forgive him, and thus he ends his words:

"How his flowing blood extinguishes all the burning vengeance of my heart! How does my anger vanish with his vanishing life! (going to him.) Die, I forgive thee!"

These words make upon us the favorable impression which an honest, open, brave nature, with all its deficiencies, always makes; since it, even through its defects, becomes the more effectual instrument of destiny.

The picture of the artist shows us Beaumarchais at the moment when he is dictating to Clavigo the explanation—the moment when that which forms the chief feature of his character—the soldier-like—most distinctly appears.



Charles



CARLOS.

(*Clavigo.*)

Nothing is more natural than that natures gentle, flexible, and wavering, should join themselves to those more firm and steadfast; and again, that the latter, who for the most part have the capacity to rule, should willingly respond to such friendship, since, from their own deficiencies, they reap, themselves, the greater advantage from it. Besides this, for men of masculine character, to rule is itself the highest of enjoyments.

Carlos and Clavigo, if they were not united by friendship, would of necessity hate or despise each other, as was the case with Tasso and Antonio, for there can be no middle ground; but, having been linked together from youth by common interests, a kind of brotherly relation has grown up between them. In Carlos, we see predominant the masculine element; in Clavigo, the feminine; the former is distinguished by the strong moral points of his character, the latter by his talents. Is it, then, a wonder if they find happiness in such a friendship?

The common sense of Carlos, his sharp, sceptical character, expresses itself in his very first words. He criticises the manner of his friend, and complains that he is not more fresh and blooming; then, he tutors him in respect to women, whom he himself despises, because their noblest characteristic, their capacity for love and self-sacrifice, he cannot understand. He looks upon them simply as a plaything, but, as such, they are necessary to him:

"Fool, that is thy fault! I can never live without women, and they hinder me in nothing. I trouble myself not to say pretty things, nor comfort myself for months with fine sentiments. Your virtuous maidens are not much to my taste."

Is not this, with all its acuteness, the utterance of a nature in itself poor and dry? But, if Carlos undervalues, in general, the relations that bind society together, he judges much more correctly the relations of individuals, as, for example, those of his friend to Maria:

"That thou shouldst love her was natural; that thou shouldst promise marriage was a folly; that thou shouldst keep thy word, would be madness."

In all his judgment is manifest that inclination to scepticism which makes him in all things discern clearly the weak spot:

"If one were constant I should greatly wonder; but, behold, does not every thing in the world change?"

Under these circumstances, the manner in which Clavigo allows himself to be surprised by Beaumarchais

must have appeared very childish to a man so full of worldly wisdom, so adroit, and who through success had become so full of self-confidence. He says, with scorn, of Beaumarchais:

"Who will venture his life against such a romantic fool?"

He reproaches his friend:

"Men perceive in thee that thou art a learned man. To let thyself be so befooled!"

He sees only a cool intrigue in that which is the outbreak of excited passion, and, as he beholds his friend resolved to atone for his first error by committing a second, he breaks forth in these words:

"Every one makes, at some time, a bad hit."

It is here that he is represented by the artist, though somewhat more flatteringly than he portrayed himself.

Natures like his are very tenacious, and he by no means gives up his cause as lost. He finds good reasons in his own mind for his opposition to the marriage:

"It is a good thing that a legal guardian is set over the man who shows, by his extravagance and other follies, that he has lost his understanding. If the state does this for its citizens, about whom it does not much trouble itself, should we not do it for a friend?"

But the manner in which he overcomes it is, in the highest degree, characteristic. Carlos is not ignoble; he

is brave, but, as an adventurer, is not very conscientious in his choice of means, and, like others of his class, is accustomed to estimate men lower than they deserve, and therefore to appeal to their weaknesses, when he would obtain influence over them. A great and lofty nature inspires them, lifts them up, carries them on with itself; but he, since he has no such commanding power, and is only sober and sensible, must make his appeal to their understanding, and this he does by opposing to their noble-minded impulses, which for the most part spring only from weaknesses, other corresponding weaknesses. He knows the vanity of his friend, and so points out to him how many brilliant women he is able to possess:

"How many a maiden in Madrid is waiting for thee, hoping for thee; and if thou shouldst play them now such a trick!

"It is strange, I have known few men who made so general and strong an impression upon women as thou dost."

He shows himself disappointed in his high opinion of Clavigo:

"I have no friend but thee; men are all insufferable, unbearable to me, and thou beginnest also to be unbearable."

He appeals to his ambition, and depreciates his beloved; for a vain man, a treatment insupportable. He shows him to what ridicule he exposes himself:

"And now appears my lord, amidst the silence of the people, with his little tripping, hollow-eyed French lady, with consumption written on every feature."

Finally, as his last argument, he sets aside his scruples of conscience :

"Trifles! whims! She had the consumption while thy novel was still all the rage."

In this way he overcomes him, certainly through very unworthy motives. But wholly transformed as Clavigo is, the great point still remains, to move him to energetic action in the use of the means by which he can be released from his perplexity, means which cannot in any event be very noble.

Without doubt it is a sign of genuine friendship that Carlos takes upon himself all action, and lets his friend play a merely passive part. Nevertheless his calculation deceives him, as all the calculations in regard to men of weak character deceive, which presuppose a consistency of conduct of which they are not capable. It comes to nothing through an accident, if that can be called accident which in some way or other cannot fail to take place, since Clavigo is too weak for the part which Carlos wishes him to play, as he himself confesses.

But the manner in which Carlos attempts to give to his friend the needed strength, gives us at least a high respect for him :

"Wo to thee, that thou hast begun to tread a path which thou wilt not finish!—And what is greatness, Clavigo? To lift one's self above others in rank and reputation? Believe it not. If thine heart is not more magnanimous than other hearts, if thou art not in a condition to lift thyself composedly above those relations which would annoy a common man, so art thou, with all thy ribbons and stars, or even with the crown itself, only a common man."

It is an especial peculiarity of such natures, that, in laboring for other persons dear to them, or for great interests, they will take a burden upon themselves which they would never take to advance their own interests. From this point of view, the true friendship which Carlos everywhere manifests may atone in our eyes for the means which he uses to effect his friendly purposes.



J. Perrot del.

C. Percival sculp.

Hortense



MARIANNE.

(*The Brother and Sister.*)

THERE is scarcely a work in German literature which contains so perfect a picture within so narrow limits, and which, through the happy arrangement and solution of the plot, makes such a clear and satisfactory impression, as the attractive drama whose heroine is the charming Marianne.

If Goethe had written nothing but this little work, he must have been reckoned among the greatest of poets; the delineation of character is so wonderfully clear and beautiful, and the course of events, in which Marianne is developed before us in the most delightful manner, is so pleasing and heart-stirring.

The brother is a tolerably commonplace, though an honest and well-meaning man; one of those kindly-disposed and very honorable Philistines who form the real foundation of the German commonalty, and who, as contrasted with the English shopkeeper or the French *épicier*, have greatly the advantage, since they

possess far more true culture, tender feeling, and a certain idealism in their intimate relations. Also friend Fabrice is admirably described. He is an old *garçon*, probably a small *rentier*, who wished a hundred times to marry, but could never effect it: because those only pleased him who, through love, were glorified; but not through love for him—a fact, alas! which he found out only when it was too late. The two gentlemen, estimable as they are, play, nevertheless, merely the rôle of supports — the flower which they uplift, is Marianne.

Among men, one cannot endure what is trifling; among women, it may even increase the attraction. Their power lies rather in the heart, in feeling, and not in intellect; but it is by the latter we are accustomed to measure men, since one can so rarely discern and prove character, which is equally important.

Marianne is neither intellectual nor imposing, but has a great deal of soul; her wealth lies in her heart, and all that she does is beautified, enlivened, and ennobled, through love. This secret background of her conduct, of which she herself is not conscious, and first becomes so in the course of the play, gives to her whole appearance the most amiable warmth, to which the poet has joined the most charming naïveté and freshness.

She is represented, as she first appears before us, when she hears her brother utter her name, and rushes

in from the kitchen, where she has been plucking pigeons, asking—

"What wilt thou, brother? thou callest me?"

And when he denies it, she continues—

"Does petulance impel thee that thou shouldst tease me out of the kitchen?"

How charmingly is all this described, and how happily her retreat!—

"Ah! we learn nothing from you men. If it is nothing, I go back, for I have many things yet to do; only give me one more kiss."

And when he promised her one for dessert:

"How very rude brothers are! When Fabrice, or any other good youth, could have a kiss, they would caper for joy, but the gentleman despises one which I would give. Now I go to scorch the pigeons."

It has often been named as a fault of the Germans, that they transfer too much of feeling and its demands, into their practical activity, and allow it to mingle with business. But it should rather be classed among our greatest advantages, for it has made us the most industrious nation in the world; since it is only in this way that the whole man can be interested in his labor, and is, also, in this way, much less fatigued. If this is true of the men, it is still more true of German women; they are the best housewives that can be found, because the house is to them the world. When

did it ever occur to an Italian or French woman, cheerfully to make coffee, or to knit stockings, merely because they are for their loved ones, as did our Marianne, as she so merrily explains?—

"To leave my brother! that would be unendurable—impossible, let any other prospect be as charming as it may—oh, never! Who will oversee his keeping? Who will take care of him?

"When I wake up, I listen to hear if he is already up; if nothing stirs, I hurry to the kitchen, kindle a fire, that the water may be boiling hot, till the servant comes, and so he has his coffee as soon as he awakes. And then I sit down and knit stockings for him, and measure him ten times, to see if they are long enough, whether they fit well, whether the foot is not too short, so that he often becomes very impatient."

Is it possible that one should, in a more beautiful way, unite the occupation of the hands with that of the heart? yet does not every German woman do it? Is not every one unhappy who cannot do it? Is it not a blessing for our nation that it is so, and a sufficient compensation for all our other faults, that we know how to unite the ideal and the real in this way; two things which, by other nations, are kept so far apart?

The relation of the loving companion to the husband of her heart, the marriage state itself, has never been more beautifully described than Marianne describes it, when she adds:

"I know not; when he sits thus by the table, leaning his head upon his hands, and looks down and is anxious, I can sit for an hour and look at him. I say often to myself, he is not handsome; but it is pleasant to me to look upon him. I know very well that it is for me that he is anxious. So soon as he looks up, his first glance tells me that, and this goes a great way."

In this simple description, Goethe is as classic as in the very best parts of his works; for he has rarely succeeded in reflecting so truly the deepest peculiarities of our emotional nature in so touching and so unadorned a manner. The beauty of this passage is surpassed only by that in which it becomes clear to Marianne, through the offer of Fabrice, that she cannot leave her brother—that she loves him alone:

"Only with thee, alone, can I live; only with thee would I live. This feeling has always been in my heart, and now it must come forth. I love thee alone—

"I cannot tell thee—

"It is to me as yesterday, when the market burned; smoke and vapor covered all, till the fire reached the roof, and the whole house was in flames.—Leave me not, brother; cast me not from thee, brother—

"I will willingly promise not to marry; I will ever take care of thee, for ever and ever—

"No one loves thee so well as I, no one can love thee so well. Thou art ever so reserved, and I have ever had on my lips to say all that is in my heart, but have not dared.

"God be thanked that this chance has unloosed my tongue!"

Can one express with more naïve and simple charm the immeasurable wealth of love? May the character of Marianne—which is as true as it for a hundred years has been common amongst us, and which is still common—abide forever! So long as it does so, so long as the hearts of German women recognize themselves in this mirror, so long is there hope for the German nation.





STELLA.

(*Stella.*)

If a great master and a bungler both produce something bad, there is confessedly, nevertheless, a very important difference in their productions. Indeed, this difference also exists even if the bungler has produced something good; for, in this case, the labor of the master is worth more than his. There dwells in it a living power which the first is never able to reach. He may, sometimes, make a good throw, as a blind hen may find a pearl; and may, if he have good material, accomplish something that surprises us. But, in fact, he only nonplusses us, and makes us curious and eager for a moment; for, so soon as our astonishment is past, we see the threadbareness of the whole patchwork. We laugh over the pasteboard and the wires which, for a moment, make us imagine puppets to be men. But if, on the other hand, the master makes a bad throw, only a single figure is thereby spoiled. We shall surely find, by at-

tentive observation, even in his worst works, figures significant and marvellous; or, at least, so full of life, that they would make a common artisan a rich man.

These remarks will apply to the ill-famed "Stella" of Goethe, without doubt, a play very faulty in its first management. But, if the hero appears to us very poorly drawn, and the conflict ends in a very unsatisfactory manner, the other figures show, nevertheless, plainly enough, the pencil of a great painter of the heart. They are the products of an artist who gives unity to his characters, who has seen them living and moving before his eyes, and who does not, like a bungler, laboriously put together, piecemeal, mere memories of the works of others.

How admirable is the busy postmistress, who feels such a pressing impulse to marry again, and whose tongue moves faster than her hands—the restless gossip, who retails all the slanders of the place, though in other respects a good-natured person, provided she has first belabored sufficiently the servants! How admirable are also the dirty waiter-boy, and the jolly, thirsty postilion, and the naïve Nannie, each outlined with a few masterly strokes! How natural, spontaneous, and borrowed from the life, is the whole dialogue, even to the part of the buckram Fernando, consoling himself in his perplexity with moral twaddle, who plainly came into the world at that unfortunate time when the poet

was at the height of his popularity among the Weimar ladies, and took this poetic way of making confession of his dislike of broken hearts!

As if feeling the necessity of making some requital, he has invested Stella with all the loveliness with which he is so richly able to invest his female characters. Who can read the play, and not see her bodily before him; the slender, yet full and rounded figure, with all its gliding, irregular, and, nevertheless, graceful movement; a pleasing languor, a heart that finds its satisfaction solely in love; a mind which is under the control of this heart, and is compelled to obey its dictates, be they wise or foolish, as quickly and skilfully as possible; and understanding which, like a well-trained duenna, is always out of the way when it should be present?

Who does not see the soft profusion of blond locks, out of which peeps the beautiful oval of her charming head, with the large, deep-blue, ever-laughing eyes, for the greater part of the time half-closed to conceal their brightness, but from time to time shooting forth a vivid flash; a half-opened, languishing mouth; a hue varying from white to red alternately; the little hands never accustomed to labor, but meant for kisses; and the melodious voice which, like a silver bell, resounds to the alto of Madame Sommer? All the world loves the gentle, delicate creature; even the postmistress says to Lucien:

"Whosoever lives with our gracious lady is happy—she is the best soul in the world, and all her pleasure is with children. She helps the peasant girls until they are well trained, and then seeks a good place for them."

According to the same authority, she is as beautiful as an angel, although care has made her pale, and has impressed upon a forehead, which seemed made only for smiles, the impress of painful seclusion. A woman who is not loved feels herself ever alone; seeks ever occupation, and, if she finds none which wholly engrosses her, becomes more and more restless; therefore, we hear her say of the coming of Lucy:

"I can scarcely wait for it. How impatient are we to realize every little wish, even to the getting of a new garment!"

She is fitted to adorn the life of her husband, and to afford him a thousand happy hours, when he turns to her from the weariness of labor. For work she is not adapted; she can only, in the most charming manner, play and love, as she says to Madame Sommer:

"You have loved. God be thanked, you can understand me! you can have sympathy with me; you do not look coldly upon my pain.—We cannot help it that we are so."

She is frank and decided, and occasionally charmingly naïve, as where she says:

"Know what kindness you do me, if you remain. Oh, I cannot be alone; I have done all; I have busied myself with poultry, and deer, and hounds; and taught little girls to knit and net, in order not to be lonely."

She makes to Madame Sommer the proposition, that she should help her in this work of amusement; but she is also ingenious and sprightly, as soon as any matters of the heart are in question, as we see from her expression:

"The figure of the man is the text of all that can be thought or said respecting him."

A saying so true, that it meets a response from every artist. It is wholly corresponding to such a character, that she does not first ask Fernando, upon his return, why he went away, but in rapture calls to the statue of Venus:

"Dost thou see him, goddess? Again is he here. How often have I, like a fool, wandered up and down, and wept and complained before thee!"

One does not ask why the sun again rises; and is not love for her the only light of life? It is, therefore, a simple, commonplace remark, when she says to her lover:

"Now, Fernando, as I see, thou hast not become more prudent. God forgive thee that thou art such a reprobate, and so good!"

That Stella is truly good-hearted, we see from the amiable circumstance that she sends away the man of her love, whom she had just found again, to bring the two ladies who had slipped away privately, in order to avoid him. A selfish nature would have sent the

servants, but she will allow no one near her to suffer. While she is happy, she will, in the most delicate manner, make others happy.

That this sweet creature, deceived in the man of her choice, had sacrificed all: position in the world, family, riches, honor—is not this sufficient to induce her, voluntarily, to bid farewell to a life in which she had been so cruelly betrayed?





LUCY.

(*Stella.*)

Among the many charming female characters which Goethe has drawn, there is but one example of that amiable class which one is accustomed to call, in ungallant phrase, "pan-fish." This is our Lucy. She is a very attractive and merry specimen of this class, and her careless pertness, and incomparable freshness, give a relish to the otherwise somewhat tedious society which we find in "Stella." And truly it was no small task, even with such an addition, to make such an insipid morsel as Fernando, and such a watery dish as Madame Sommer, tolerably tasteful. We may call it a poetical masterpiece in the style of French cookery, where the side dishes are generally better than the main dish.

We know not whence this term "pan-fish" was derived, nor what it should denote; perhaps it means that these fish are not fully done, or that they are without bones, and so can be eaten without any special precaution; possibly it may be that, on account of their imper-

fect growth, they are not yet thought worthy to be eaten with vinegar. But, whatever conjectures we may make respecting the hidden etymology of the word, all tend to this, that we have something imperfect or immature.

In spite of all this, the Fräulein Lucy by no means belongs to the class of the unfinished and half-developed; she is on very good terms with herself and with the whole world. Happy period of youth! that is never in doubt, and sees all things around it in the clearest light, since it yields to the mysterious impulse and to the sudden inspiration of Nature and of the moment!

We meet the busy girl in the situation in which the artist represents her, when, loaded down with manifold satchels and sacks and bags, which are the inseparable accompaniments of all travelling ladies, she exercises herself in the art of giving commands—an art in which the more beautiful sex especially delights. But, when she says to the postilion:

"Let it be, it is not heavy; but take the satchel from my mother!"

she nevertheless lays hold upon it also, herself, showing a quick, active disposition. And, when her mother reproves her—

"Canst thou not cease giving commands? Thou hast, it seems to me, already had time enough to become wiser; we have ever paid for more than we have consumed, and in our circumstances—"

we learn at once that she has one peculiarity, which, in the straitened circumstances in which she grew up, is

doubly estimable, that of generosity. This is no peculiarity of women, and she probably inherited it, with her joyous carelessness, from her light-hearted and gentlemanly father. And she answers:

"You say always, mamma, that I am wilful, but at least I am not avaricious."

She is, in her restless character, a true soldier's child; puts herself on an equality with every one; is frank even to indiscretion—a frankness which admirably suits so beautiful and naïve a creature. When she is to dine alone with Fernando, and is asked whether she would not be afraid, she says:

"Not in the least. I would rather be with soldiers than with others, they do not at all dissemble, and one can know at once which are the good and which the bad."

When one is young, the whole world belongs to him, but each year bears away a province, until we learn at last to satisfy ourselves with a very narrow territory. So Lucy had all the egoism of youth, and ruled with a free hand over all that was not hers. She says, when she hears of Stella:

"I hope that she may please me, for if I would accommodate myself to any one, heart and will must go with it; otherwise, it is of no avail."

Truly, she demeaned herself almost as if Stella were entering into her service, when returning from her she ludicrously remarks:

"A lovely little woman, with whom I shall agree well."

In fine, Madame Sommer and the postmistress are very right when the first says:

"My daughter is still a bit flighty"—

and the other responds:

"That is the way of youth; these childish follies will soon be over."

And in another place, she kindly says of her that "she is very young and saucy." It would be hard for us to contradict her in this point, when we remember the entertainment which she has with the stranger at the table, and hear her further when she instructs him:

"You gentlemen think yourselves indispensable. I do not know this, for I have grown up without men."

But, on the other hand, her courage always pleases us, and the happy confidence of a pure heart, and especially the love, the care, the sympathy, which she upon every occasion expresses for her mother. Referring to her father and mother, she says:

"I owe it to my father that I have come into the world, for I live happy and contented; but she, who had set all her hopes in life upon him, and had sacrificed to him the flower of her youth—and now forsaken, all at once forsaken! It must be something frightful to feel one's self forsaken; nevertheless, I have lost nothing, and I can say nothing."

Stella describes our Lucy excellently, in a couple of words, when she calls her:

"A little obstinate thing; a good generous soul."

How sorrowful is it to see so lovely, sincere, and innocent a creature ensnared by the cruel fate which mirrors itself in the play before us, and in which her own father, to whom she should be able to look with honor and love, plays before her eyes such a pitiful part! In the honesty of her character she hearkens only to the most natural impulse, when, with all the energy and decision which she had shown in the frightful catastrophe at the castle, she bestows her sympathy not upon her father, but upon Stella, and says to her:

"I leave thee not; I remain with thee."

It is necessary that she should be reminded by Stella of the duty which she owed him, and, nevertheless, goes unwillingly; and truly she was right. What lively interest could she feel for one who had been nothing to her, and who had poisoned with a frightful remembrance the existence of the blooming, joyous child, for the remainder of that life which we saw begin so full of innocence and courage?





COUNT EGMONT.

(*Egmont.*)

If poetry will transform distinctly-marked historic personages to answer its own subjective ends, it frequently happens that it becomes less poetic than history itself. And so, in our judgment at least, it has been with Goethe in his Egmont, who is far less interesting than on the historic page; more attractive, and not so tragic.

It is a characteristic, closely connected with the inner nature of our poet, that his male figures appear rather suffering than acting. With the exception of Faust and Götz, they seem to be the playthings of circumstances; the victims of events, to which they oppose no firm will, no definite plans. The poet pictures them before us with wonderful skill, and great fidelity to truth, but their features are stereotyped; they remain the same from beginning to end. We obtain glorious portraits, but not historic figures, because we do not see his heroes developing themselves, or changing as the cir-

cumstances around them change. Immobility is stamped upon their characters. Goethe is, therefore, by no means so successful a dramatic poet as Schiller. He succeeds better in lyric poetry, for his characters are the expression of a single emotion or sentiment, and are ever true to this; but in his plays, the whole is a succession of situations, and the action goes on in the intervals. This is, as we have said, closely connected with the genius of the poet himself, who rather permits events to flow on, than attempts to control them. Fortune, in pouring golden apples liberally into his lap, had so far spoiled him that he applied all the power of his will to his own internal culture, and became almost indifferent to outward things. In this manner, grow up, indeed, great artists, but not dramatic heroes. Thus are produced men of thought, but not of action; lovable natures, but who easily succumb to the oppositions they meet in life, and awaken rather our compassion than our admiration. This we give only to the heroic warrior, who compels us to honor him, even when he is overcome. The very spectacle of his energetic struggle, his bravery, exalts the soul.

The poet of "Egmont" has so far felt this as to give his hero the quality of bravery, as the foundation of his character. He comes before us a hero; of his heroism, all the world talks; we hear of him in all quarters, before we see him; his knightly and splendid appearance has touched the popular fancy; his name is upon

every one's lip. "He shoots as well as his lord; he shoots like Egmont," says one. "He is the conqueror of St.-Quentin; he is the hero of Gravelines. We are indebted to him for peace—to the great Egmont. He knows how to live and let live."

"In our province, we sing just what we please; that's because Count Egmont is our stadtholder, who does not trouble himself about such matters."

He is patient and good-natured; one sees him in all the streets; he is in every man's thoughts. The regentess complains, indeed, that he bears his head as high as if the world belonged to him—he does harm to the Government, and no good to himself; but she loves better to hear him defend himself than to accuse him; pleading his frankness, his ingenuous countenance, how the eyes of the people are directed to him, and their hearts hang on him! So we learn to know him, before we have seen him, as the idol of the people, and, before all, of women. Finally, he himself appears, and signalizes his appearance, by quieting the excited multitude.

"Do what you can to preserve peace. Oh, people! you are charged already with evil enough."

This is the way which gains him personal popularity, but which will hardly avail him in time of need. We see him afterward with his subjects, kind, humane, thoughtful, and magnanimous, high-hearted as a true

hero, which he is, even if there be wanting in him deep, passionate feeling; and he is a little prodigal, and careless about his own safety:

"Shall I give up the present moment, in order that I may be certain of the next, and then consume this again with anxieties and cares?"

He is, also, by no means, without ambition, and can use his stratagems:

"I stand high, and must rise still higher; I feel in me hope, courage, and strength. I have not yet reached the summit of my elevation—should I fall, a thunderbolt, a tempest, yea, even a faulty step, throws me backward into the abyss—so be it."

Always inclined to fatalism, he will live rather as a gambler, than as one who plans to succeed. Nevertheless, he is ingenious, active, and acute; knows thoroughly men and things, and sees what is right, as we learn from his conversations with Orange and Clare, and the interview with Alba, where he speaks very wisely, although he had fallen without suspicion into the snare. How true are his words, when he says:

"And is the good-will of a people not the surest, noblest pledge?"

And when he characterizes the plans of despotism:

"It is the king's purpose, less to govern the provinces, according to uniform and plain laws, to secure the majesty of religion, to give a general peace to his people, than to bring them to unconditional submission."

And judges his countrymen:

"It is hard to obtain their confidence, easy to preserve it; inflexible and firm, they may be oppressed, they cannot be crushed."

In spite of all warnings, his natural goodness of heart leads him to hope for a reconciliation with a power which he himself describes as blinded, and to which he, at this very moment, falls a victim.

There needs no other delineation of his character than the fact that, to the end of the fourth act, or to his death, he appears as a hero, and we hear him speak as a frank, noble-minded, and sagacious man; but he has done nothing, unless his defence of his countryman, in his dialogue with Alba, should count for a deed. Even when the presentiment of the fate that awaited him rose in his mind and finds utterance:

"What shakes thy firm, true will? I feel it; it is the ring of the murderous axe, gnawing at thy root"—

yet he remains as he was, and clings firm to the hope, even to the last, that he shall be rescued by his friends:

"Yes, they assemble in thousands; they come, they stand beside me—if no angel stoops to my deliverance, I see them grasp eagerly their lance and sword."

When all hope vanishes, then we see him as a hero triumph over the fear of death; and come, though too late, to the consciousness of his mission:

"Protect your homes; and, to deliver your dear ones, fall joyfully, as I give you an example. I die for freedom, for which I lived and fought, and for which I now sacrifice my life."

But, even here, still he expresses that fatalistic view which is so characteristic of the poet:

"Man believes that he controls his life, that he directs his own ways, but he is irresistibly led by the hand of destiny."

Egmont appears to us most amiable in his relation to Clare, resting quietly in her tender affection, listening to her prattle, and pleasing himself good-humoredly with her admiration of the splendor of his Spanish costume; and it is in this mood that the artist has depicted him. He is presented to us on that side of his nature which makes him so dear to us, in spite of all his weaknesses, in his pure, beautiful humanity.





CLARE.

(*Egmont.*)

Although poetry may be, indeed, the mirror of life, the poet can nevertheless learn to know only the life that lies around him, and comprehend the past only through the mediation of the present. His work will therefore always bear, more or less, the features of his own day, and this the more in proportion as he holds fast to Nature. It is on this account that the Romans of Shakespeare are, confessedly, as much English as the Italians of Schiller are German. We cannot, therefore, wonder if, in spite of all their personal courage, the irresolute mood of the German reflects itself only too plainly in Goethe's masculine characters. It should be said that the figures he brings before us arose, for the most part, in that long period of profound peace and unbroken repose which Germany enjoyed, from the end of the Seven-Years' War down to the last decennium of the century, and which period, in its narrowness of character, in its want of all national life, and in the absolutism everywhere pre-

dominant, was little fitted to fashion active and powerful minds, although it certainly laid, slowly and surely, a basis for intellectual freedom.

If such a period was little fitted to educate men for action, it was the more favorable for the unfolding of feminine characteristics. We have certainly to thank this circumstance, before all others, for that fulness of most beautiful female figures which we find in Goethe's works, whose truth to Nature, naïveté, and sweet attractiveness, can be compared only with what we find in the Bible. In these characteristics, his creations surpass, for the most part, those of Shakespeare.

One of the freshest and most natural of these is, beyond all doubt, our Clare. In her there are a warmth of life, a spontaneity, a power and beauty of feeling, which place her in the rank of the most beautiful figures which German art has ever created, and which must engrave her features deep in every sensitive heart.

Clare is a perfect child of Nature; she gives herself up to every impression, and, above all, to her passion for the proud hero whose name is upon every lip, with all the strength of an undisciplined soul, that, even in its entire inexperience, exults in every thing that is great and famous. Since women remain much more true to Nature than do men, and their early emotions are much more active and permanent, we need not wonder that Clare quickly forgot the artisan, Brackenburg, for the handsome soldier, without withdrawing from him, nevertheless,

her good will, or ceasing to sympathize with him in his silent sorrow, a feeling which he mistook for a still continuing affection, and which is closely allied to that natural coquetry which is inborn in the female character, and wholly compatible with a good heart.

What especially charms us in Clare is, that she is not of a suffering, patient nature; but that a bold, heroic soul flames out in her. From this springs her unbounded devotion to Egmont, which her mother, after a feminine way, laments, although she had herself done all that was possible to encourage it, and which perfectly justifies him in her eyes, although the world blames him. When the mother chides her in bitterest words, she answers with fullest assurance:

"A castaway! the beloved of Egmont a castaway! What princess but would envy the poor Clare her place in his heart? Oh! mother, my own mother, you were not wont to speak thus. Be kind! let the people think, let the neighbors whisper, what they like, this chamber, this lowly house, is a paradise since Egmont's love dwelt here."

That which one will not only live for, but, like Clare, be ready to die for, may be claimed with good right as his own. This glowing ardor of her nature every where appears, if that point is touched in which her whole soul is compressed—toward every thing else is she indifferent. Jean Paul's words may truly be said of her, "To a woman love is all in all, to a man it is only an occasional occupation." Very charmingly she expresses this when she says of Egmont:

"Never mind; when he is with me I am never hungry, so he cannot, I should think, have any great appetite when I am with him"—

and then stamps her feet, and turns her back upon him with the words:

"How cold you are to-day! You have not yet offered me a kiss. Why do you keep your arms enveloped in your mantle, like a new-born babe; it becomes neither a soldier nor a lover to keep his arms muffled up."

And, after the love scene, in the excess of her rapture, she breaks out in the words:

"Now let me die, the world hath no joy more to give"—

words which were only too early, fearfully fulfilled. Thus far we have seen in her only the tender, devoted woman, but after Egmont's arrest the heroine appears, and in this character has the painter depicted her, since it is this heroic element which especially distinguishes her from most of her sex. We see her calling, with fiery words, the timid citizens to their weapons, and, with bitter scorn, she replies to the cowards who entreat her not to name Egmont's name:

"Not speak his name? not Egmont's name? is it not on every tongue? does it not appear everywhere legibly inscribed? I read it emblazoned in golden letters among the stars—stay, stay, shrink not away at the sound of his name, to meet whom ye were wont to press forward so joyously, when rumor announced his approach; when the cry arose, Egmont comes! Send your thoughts forward into the future. Could ye live, would ye live, were he to perish? With him expires the last breath of freedom!"

And, when it is objected to her that she is beside herself, she replies, proudly:

"I have neither the arms, nor the strength of a man, but I have that which ye all lack, courage and contempt of danger. Oh! that my breath could kindle your souls!

"—Beside myself! horrible! you, Brackenburg, are beside yourself. When you hailed the hero with loud acclaim, called him your friend, your hope, your refuge, shouted vivats when he passed, then I stood in my corner, half opened the window, concealed myself while I listened, and my heart beat higher than yours, who greeted him so loudly. Now it again beats higher. In the hour of peril you conceal yourselves, deny him, and feel not that, if he perish, you are lost."

The striving of the courageous maiden with her exceeding despair, when she sees one hope vanish after another, and herself too powerless to help him, is one of the most striking passages of our poetry, and, when taken in its contrast to the naïve charm and brilliance of her first appearing, will give her a place among those characters which are impressed most deeply on the German heart.





WILLIAM OF ORANGE.

(*Egmont.*)

The first condition of success is, that one shall not talk of his intentions. "Silence is gold, speech silver," says the proverb. William of Orange was too shrewd a man not to have sought the title of "silent" on principle. Every age has such an abundance of maxims and principles, that one can judge a man by his selection of them, for every man selects such as correspond to his inclinations and his position; only fools attempt to walk in other people's footsteps, never asking whether they can stride so far.

One need only cast a glance upon the thoughtful, care-worn, and firm features of the great leader of the Netherlanders, as the artist brings him before us (following the many portraits of him which exist), in the scene in which he warns Egmont, in order to be convinced that he looks like the very statue of silence. Silence is, with him, not only a fixed principle, but also a natural tendency. His fine compressed lips seem like two zealous door-keepers, who carefully examine every word before it passes over the threshold.

As a counterpart to the life-loving and talkative Egmont, Goethe could find no one better fitted than his elder friend, whose reserved, cautious, determined, resolute character, hidden behind the veil of mystery, in which he wrapped all his purposes, gives us ample opportunity to speculate respecting his future history and destiny. In this respect, he is remarkably contrasted with the frank Egmont, whose only fault is, that he opens every thing to our eyes, has no reserve, and that one can always anticipate what he will do. Notwithstanding we love the frank and open man, we can scarcly avoid taking advantage of his frankness, and thus his power of action is diminished; one fears and shuns the reserved man, whose taciturnity makes him strong.

Silence is the wisdom of dunces, say the loquacious Frenchmen; we believe it to be also the wisdom of statesmen—at least, there are examples of many others besides the Prince of Orange who have cherished this quality, if they did not rather prefer to use language to conceal their thoughts.

The poet has indeed to complement this one feature of the character of our hero with many others; and for them all, aside from the occasional expressions of his enemies and friends concerning him, which intimate to us his high importance, has only one brief scene. He has been very successful in bringing him before us just as he was, exactly as history has depicted him. First of all, we perceive in him the fine gift of observation; he sees the minutest de-

tails, at the same time that he takes a comprehensive survey of the whole:

"I stand as over a chess-board, and regard no move of my adversary as insignificant, and, as men of science carefully investigate the secrets of Nature, so I hold it to be the duty, aye, the very vocation of a prince, to acquaint himself with the dispositions and intentions of all parties."

This close attention is not that of the mere inquirer, but the watchfulness of the soldier; he knows that life is a battle in which one must either beat or be beaten; and to this watchfulness is added the skill of the accountant, who, out of the two known factors, knows how to infer the third and unknown.

The statesman is distinguished from the mere thinker in this, that he has not only insight into the condition of things, but resolves what to do. All observation is with him only preparatory to action. William of Orange proves himself to be wholly a statesman, whilst Egmont, unsuspicious, will not believe in the danger approaching; he has already resolved how he will meet it, and has made all preparation therefor. But he knows not only his enemy (and it is from this knowledge that he plans what he will do), he knows also himself, his powers, as well as the obligations of his position. When Egmont objects to him:

"Consider for what you are answerable if you are wrong, for the most fatal war that ever yet desolated a country—since you will see those, for whose liberty you drew the sword, perishing around you; and what will be your emotions, when conscience whispers, 'It was for my own safety that I drew it!'"—

he replies with truth:

"We are not ordinary men, Egmont. If it becomes us to sacrifice ourselves for thousands, it becomes us no less to spare ourselves for thousands—wisdom and courage alike prompt us to meet an inevitable evil."

This is the only time that he speaks of the people and of the cause which he represents, and he does this now only because Egmont had given him the occasion; in general, he looks to his own interest. He has the instinct of a ruler, and is by no means a republican, as we see out of his replies, for when Egmont, careless in the consciousness of his innocence, objects:

"And has the king truer servants than we?"

he answers:

"We serve him after our own fashion; and, between ourselves, it must be confessed that we understand pretty well how to make the interests of the king square with our own."

Looking at his circumspection and decision, one can hardly get rid of the suspicion that he desired the approach of that conflict which he knew to be unavoidable. With what unsparing bluntness does he express himself, when he says of his opponents:

"And how if they were both foolish and unjust?"

In what manner this man had power over the people, in spite of his reserved character, or rather on account of the same, we see from the language of the gossiping Jetter:

"We must not forget him, he is a very wall of defense. In thinking of him one fancies that if one could only hide behind him, the devil himself could not get at one. Here's to William of Orange! Hurra!"

The poor tailor shows here that right instinct which a people almost always has in regard to its great men; it feels the greatness which it cannot fully understand. How high an opinion Alva had of him, we see from his agitation when he failed to arrest him; the greater half of his work seemed to have miscarried.

Goethe says somewhere that he wished to show in his "Egmont" how rights and liberties, though well secured by charters, have no power to resist the attack of a determined and sagacious despot. Without doubt this reflection was an after-thought, for the play did not arise out of this abstract consideration, but out of the plastic materials which history furnishes. Nor is his proposition wholly right, since we have already learned to know, in the Prince of Orange, one who has the ability to lead freedom on to victory. We recognize in him not simply the cool calculator, the circumspect and at the same time resolved character, but one who has a heart as well as head. He loves Egmont, who is in a measure his rival, and the warning he gives to the careless man, his final separation from him, and the pain it occasions him, seen in one so taciturn and rigid, touch us the more, since his character has features of greatness and dignity which, in spite of all his practical tendencies, never leave him.





MARGARET OF PARMA.

(*Egmont.*)

Nature has appointed women to follow, not to lead. Should a feminine nature show itself fitted to lead, it must, at the same time, show masculine characteristics, which may serve as her credentials.

The regent, Margaret of Parma, to whom Goethe ascribes the princely and grand character, and the statesmanlike talent, which one might expect from a daughter of Charles the Fifth, he brings before us as a kind of amazon. To-day, she goes not to the chase; to-day, she does not ride: this is the first which we hear of her. One thinks of her, as Clare has expressed it, as having a proud figure, large, stout-hearted, determined, with thick neck, a full bust, a shrill voice, a "little mustache, and sometimes an attack of the gout," as Egmont pleasantly jested. She is a blonde, but a blonde with a faint tinge of red; she has luxuriant hair; a lofty brow; a bold, prominent nose; clear, penetrating blue eyes, and a firm, proud mouth, which, as well as

the strong, energetic chin, tells of a fiery temperament,—the whole beautified by an expression of benevolence.

Not only did Margaret take pleasure in ruling, but she had, also, natural capacity therefor, as we learn from her own language to Machiavelli:

"Full well I know that the policy of statesmen rarely maintains truth and fidelity; that it excludes from the heart candor, charity, toleration."

We see this not less in the acute and sagacious way in which she judges those around her. With few words she sketches persons, so that we seem to have them living before us, and reads rightly all those peculiarities of character which it is important for her to know. Thus, to Machiavelli, she says:

"You see too far, you should be an historian; he who acts, must provide for the exigence of the hour."

Of Orange:

"I fear Orange—I fear for Egmont. Orange meditates some dangerous scheme; his thoughts are far-reaching—he is reserved, appears to accede to every thing, never contradicts, and, while maintaining the show of reverence with clear foresight, accomplishes his own designs.

We hear her speak of Egmont:

"He has never assumed the least disguise, and carries himself as if no one had a right to call him to account; he still bears the name of Egmont. Count Egmont is the title by which he loves to hear himself addressed, as though he would fain be reminded that his ancestors were masters of Guelderland."

And again of Alva:

"But there sits the hollow-eyed Toledan, with brazen front and deep fire-glance, muttering between his teeth about womanish softness, ill-timed concession, and that women can ride trained steeds well enough, but are themselves bad horse-breakers. He regards every one as a blasphemer or traitor, for, under this head, they can be racked, impaled, quartered, and burnt at pleasure."

Especially she characterizes admirably her brother, Philip the Second, in his relations to her, which, however, does not hinder her from paying more respect to his opinions than to her own, and to regard his interests more than those of the state:

"He is so thoroughly convinced of the depth of my views, so extraordinarily satisfied with the prudence of my conduct, that I must almost say the letter is too politely written for a king; certainly, for a brother."

It is in this scene that the artist has represented her, and has used for this purpose the existing portraits, and so much the more willingly, as they perfectly correspond to her character, as Goethe has conceived it. With her talent and love for rule, she is too proud to play an insignificant part:

"It is so sweet to reign, and to abdicate! I know not how my father could do so, but I will also.

"... He who is accustomed to rule, to hold daily in his hand the destiny of thousands, descends from the throne as into the grave. Better thus, however, than linger a spectre among the living, and, with hollow aspect, endeavor to maintain a place which another has inherited, and already possesses and enjoys."

Margaret knows how to dissemble; nevertheless, she has "not more faults than any one who will carry

out his purposes," as Egmont asserts. Let us hear him further:

"She is an admirable lady, knows her people, and would see deep enough, if she were not so suspicious."

Still more plainly do we discern this characteristic in her conversation with Machiavelli, where she expresses her suspicions of the frank Egmont:

"His banquets and entertainments have done more to unite the nobles and to knit them together, than the most dangerous, secret associations—he injures us, without benefiting himself."

With all her capacity for government, she remains, nevertheless, a woman who cannot deny her sex. Egmont describes her best to Orange, when he says of her:

"She is a woman, good Orange, and all women expect that every one shall submit passively to their gentle yoke; that every Hercules shall lay aside his lion's skin, assume the distaff, and swell their train; and, because they are themselves peaceably inclined, imagine, forsooth, that the ferment which seizes a nation—the storm which powerful rivals excite against one another—may be allayed by one soothing word, and the most discordant elements be brought to unite in tranquil harmony at their feet. It is thus with her, and, since she cannot accomplish her object, she has no resource left but to lose her temper, to menace us with direful prospects for the future, and to threaten to take her departure."

One thing that especially marks her, in contrast with her general liberality of spirit, is her inclination to bigotry, which she had in common with her whole Spanish-Austrian family, and which cannot surprise us, certainly, at such a time, and under such circumstances.

"Shall we be indifferent to our established faith, for the sake of which so many have sacrificed their lives?"

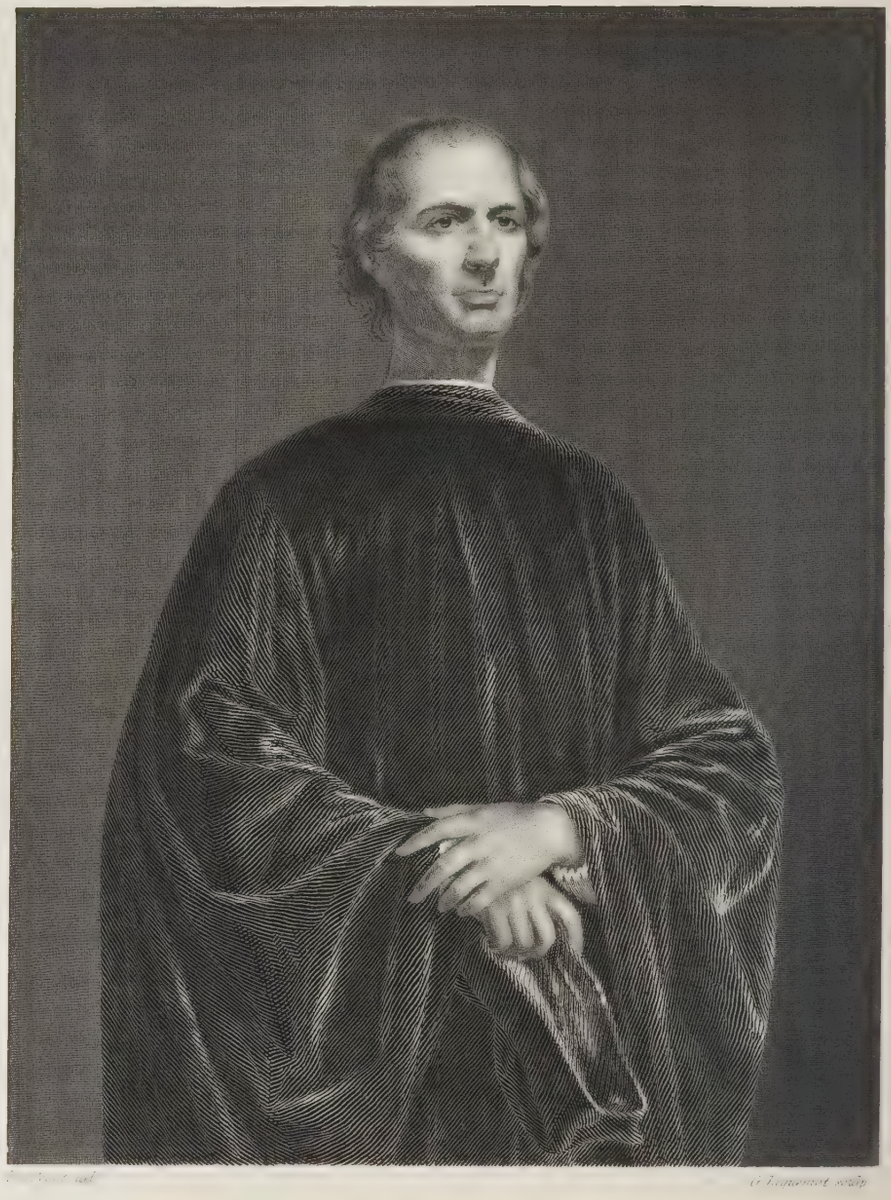
This feature the popular mind thus describes by the mouth of Jetter:

"She is prudent and moderate in all she does, if she would only not hold so fast to the priests."

In the main, this is, as we have said, a family peculiarity, but it is also consistent with the strong emotive nature in her, which is not a family trait, but one much in her favor. She loves the Netherlanders, and the people are grateful to her, and she is even able to restore, at last, a tolerable peace. In this respect, the mildness of the woman accomplishes what a man could not, for free nations bear more easily than slaves the government of a woman; and thus that beautiful antique bass-relief, where a lion allows itself to be ridden by a child, sets forth, symbolically, a deep truth of our human nature.

Margaret of Parma attracts us to herself, because it is impossible for her to overcome the laws of her organization, and cease to be a woman whose heart rules her head. The poet has presented this characteristic with extraordinary skill, and shown admirably that, with whatever theme her conversation began, it was sure to end with Egmont. She blames him on every occasion, disputes with him, is angry at him, but — her thoughts are always occupied with him. One may as

well forbid the magnet to turn to the north, as prevent a woman from turning to the object of her regard. This, more than any thing else, makes Margaret lovely, so that we part from her with esteem and good-will. When we see the heroine and hero thus united, we embrace them both in the bond of a common sympathy.





MACHIAVELLI.

(*Egmont.*)

What led Goethe to identify the famous Florentine, who had been dead for half a century, with the secretary of the Duchess of Parma, is not merely the sameness of names, but also the fitness of such a distinguished character for the purposes of his drama. No one will question that the representative of Florentine state-craft, and the creator of modern politics, would play a very fitting part as a councillor at the court of this sagacious and politic woman. This consideration might have been the decisive one in the mind of the poet for selecting this almost wholly unknown man, and so depicting him, that he may readily be taken for the Florentine Machiavelli. Less distinguished, in fact, than the other secretaries of the duchess, much is attributed to him which is really due to the councillor of state, Viglius. If this identity of names satisfied the poet, much more may the artist turn to the historic character, and give to Machiavelli the features which we still admire to-day, in the

admirable bust of the historian, now in the gallery at Florence, features which give us the personal characteristics as we find them reflected in his works.

We see here, certainly, no attractive face, but one expressing firmness without arrogance. A taciturn thinker, with an understanding sharp and unsparing, mental strength is impressed upon all his features in a degree which is very rare. No misleading fancy, no gentle play of feeling, no desire of self-gratification, acts as a happy counterpoise to the intellectual predominance. His mind gains new force through its faculty of acute observation, which enables him to see and make use of the weaknesses of others. He knows all the foibles and defects of human nature, and upon them his whole system is built; for he is wholly practical, if he can be called practical, who looks upon men and things only as they may serve to the accomplishment of his purpose. Open to no feeling of compassion and to no weakness, Machiavelli pushes his premises to their final conclusions, shrinks from no consequence, even the most fatal, and yet has no joy in acts of cruelty or destruction. He is, in the truest sense, a doctrinaire, who wishes nothing for himself, is perfectly unselfish, has little egotism, no passion, nor lust of power, nor ambition. If no human weakness escapes this penetrating eye unquestioned, we may yet ask whether it is able, also, to discern the nobler points of human character, and especially the creative power of the mind. Those who possess great skill in

reading the souls of men, deceive themselves often in the final result, because they have no perception of that in others which they have not themselves. Love and inspiration are elements not so easy to be calculated upon, as the weaker and darker features of human nature. Sharp and penetrating as is the glance of the Florentine, his face compact and resolute, his chin broad, the compressed mouth with its thin upperlip, which can never betray a secret, and his mocking, prominent underlip, which sarcastically spares none of the illusions of life, there is, nevertheless, something narrow in the build of the head, a want of all ideality, of all fancy, of lofty impulses and feeling. Thus we are able to understand how this man, a politician of wonderful acuteness, a philosopher of wide reach and of great learning, was not, nevertheless, a statesman of really practical and creative talent, who could carry away the masses by the energy of his will, and inspire them with a spirit of self-sacrifice. He never works upon our feelings or our fancy. He cannot, therefore, convince us, because he has not himself feeling or fancy, and, wanting these, has no true originating force. His power over us is only that of a mathematician, who may be a thousand times right in his calculations, and yet, at last, shall be found wrong. A man of such constitution is admirably fitted for the post of councillor, but not for that of statesman, even if he utters maxims which will always have an incontestable value, because they spring

from a real, though one-sided knowledge of human nature. Machiavelli is a physician, whose medicines will ever be a valuable stock in trade for despots, with the sole defect that they are good only for the sick; healthy people will not take them, but throw them and the doctor also out of the window.

If Machiavelli is a born privy-councillor, it is keen irony that the poet gives him a place under a woman who, like all women, is ever asking for council, and never follows it. This irony of fortune goes through the whole life of the Florentine. All one-sidedness of character inclines to a tragic destiny, and so is it with him. Although at the bottom of his heart he is a zealous and unselfish republican, his works have become the *vade-mecum* of all tyrants. One of his most fervent wishes was the reunion and greatness of Italy; and, nevertheless, nothing has so much contributed to its political misery, for three hundred years, as his prescriptions. He lived to see the downfall of his beloved republic, which he had served the greater part of his life with zeal, and proved the insufficiency of those things upon which he had built all his hopes for the restoration of his native land. For her he had written his famous "Prince," but she fell in spite of all his counsels; perhaps because she remained too true to the maxims of her teacher. If one reads these maxims, we are astonished at nothing so much as the total absence of all organizing and statesman-like power; they

make, in fact, merely a fruitless attempt to organize corruption.

In "Egmont," Machiavelli appears more as the representative of sound reason, than of the practical understanding, though in history the latter is his fort; the counsel which he gives the regent is in this spirit:

"How often have you said in jest, 'You see too far; Machiavelli, you should be an historian; he who acts must provide for the exigency of the hour;' and yet have I not predicted this terrible history? have I not foreseen it all? In one word, then, you will not be able to suppress the new faith: let it be recognized; separate its votaries from the true believers, give them churches of their own, include them within the pale of social order, subject them to the restraints of law; do this, and you will at once tranquillize the insurgents. Oh! that some good genius would suggest to Philip, that it better becomes a monarch to govern subjects of two different creeds, than to excite them to mutual destruction!

"How can we hope to acquire and maintain the confidence of the Netherlander, when he sees that we are more interested in appropriating his possessions, than in promoting his welfare, temporal or spiritual? Will not people prefer being governed by their own countrymen, and according to their ancient customs, rather than by foreigners, who, from their first entrance into the land, endeavor to enrich themselves at the general expense, who measure every thing by a foreign standard, and who exercise authority without cordiality or sympathy?"

Goethe represents his Florentine more as an historian and philosopher, full of sound maxims, like the historic Machiavelli, than as a practical politician, and Margaret remarks this to him. His passivity, which limits itself to the giving of counsel, and neglects immediate action; his perfect indifference to all that is called faith, and especially the tone and fashion of his speech, brief, shy, epigrammatic, are incomparably rendered.





ORESTES.

(*Iphigenia in Taurus.*)

If one compares Goethe with his great friend and companion in renown, Schiller, he is struck especially with the greater diversity of the productions of the first. While with Schiller the single parts follow each other with almost organic necessity, and the loftiness and the depth of the contents increase in equal proportions with the greater perfection of the form, and the outward life of the poet seems to have little direct influence upon either, but the whole unfolds itself by an inner law, like the stately growth of a tree; with Goethe, on the contrary, his literary activity is strongly controlled by his personal experiences, and by external causes. Upon his productions, occasional circumstances have much more influence, and his poems therefore are much more diverse in form, contents, and value. One cannot say that this is the necessary result of the fact that Goethe lived so much longer than Schiller, for, although Schiller died in his forty-sixth year, the poetic activity of Goethe was so

nearly at an end in the beginning of the fiftieth year, that only the "Elective Affinities" and the second part of "Faust" fall in a later period.

What a distinction exists between "Iphigenia" and the "Natural Daughter," the two productions which show the highest mastery of form! How is the coldness of the latter contrasted with the depth and warmth, with the glorious perfection, internal and external, of the first!

We have, in our remarks upon "Iphigenia," sought to show in what an incomparable manner she sets forth the antique beauty of form filled with the modern spirit, and thus forms a living bridge, which should eternally bind together the two. If the lovely priestess is the representative of the modern idea of humanity, in opposition to the unpitying ancient conception, Orestes, on the contrary, represents this conception in its whole undiminished strength, but also in its noble simplicity. His character is so perfectly Greek that he could as well have been the creation of Euripides as of Goethe; and, notwithstanding the strictness and the majesty of the treatment, how truthful is the whole figure! how impetuously pours the blood through the veins! How boldly is his kingly, heroic character outlined, even there where he appears enshrouded in the deep shadows of melancholy and delusion! how finely is it distinguished from that of his life-loving, active, shrewd, and skilful friend, when the former quietly resigns himself to death, and the latter uses all his ingenuity to escape the threatened destiny!—

"It is the path of death that now we tread,
At every step my soul grows more serene—
How easy 'tis for me, whose heart is crushed,
Whose sense is deadened by a hand divine,
Thus to renounce the beauteous light of day!"

How noble and touching is his recollection of his youthful years!—

"The mystic web of life my mother spread
Around my infant head, and so I grew
An image of my sire, and my mute look
Was aye a bitter and a keen reproof
To her and base Ægisthus.
Do not remind me of those tranquil days,
When me thy home a safe asylum gave.
With fond solicitude, thy noble sire
The half-nipped, tender floweret gently reared,
While thou, a friend and playmate, always gay,
Like to a light and brilliant butterfly
Around a dusky flower, didst around me,
Still with new life, thy merry gambols play."

This honest, heroic character is joined with the truest warmth, and the most acute understanding—an understanding which easily detects the sophisms of his friend, and makes him say:

"I most esteem the brave and upright man."

Magnanimity reveals itself, not only through acts, but through the manner in which it regards persons and things. Orestes shows that he possesses it in highest measure when he says to Iphigenia:

"I cannot suffer that thy noble soul
Should be deceived by error, rich in guile,
And practised in deceit; a stranger may
A web of falsehood cunningly devise
To snare a stranger; between us be truth.
I am Orestes, and this guilty head
Is stooping to the tomb, and covets death;
It will be welcome now in any shape.
Whoe'er thou art, for thee and for my friend
I wish deliverance. I desire it not."

If we feel in every word the pressure of that heavy destiny that lies upon the young hero, so appears he, nevertheless, noble in his delusion, and even the burden of his deep agony reveals the loftiness and superiority of his character:

"Hence, away, be gone!
Touch not these locks, I counsel thee; from me,
As from Creusa's bridal robe, proceeds
An inextinguishable fire.
'Twas with such looks that Clytemnestra sought
An entrance to her son Orestes' heart,
And yet his upraised arm her bosom pierced.
His mother fell!
Weep not! thy guiltless soul is free from crime;
From earliest infancy I naught have loved
As thee I could have loved, my sister!"

How is a stone rolled away from our hearts, when he, freed from his delusion, breaks forth in the words:

"My heart assures me that your curses cease.
The dread Eumenides at length retire;
The brazen gates of Tartarus I hear
Behind them, closing with a thundering clang;

A quickening odor from the earth ascends,
Inviting me to chase upon its plains
The joys of life and deeds of high emprise!"

We see that so soon as he is freed from the curse which had held his senses imprisoned, the desire to do warlike and heroic deeds asserts its power in his breast. He will conquer his freedom with the sword, and challenges to combat the best of his enemies:

"Select one of the leaders of thy host,
And place the best as my opponent here.
Where'er on earth the sons of heroes dwell
This boon is to the stranger ne'er refused."

But he sets before himself also the highest prize of combat, and remains humane in all the ardor of conflict:

"Nor let me only for our liberty—
Let me, a stranger, for all strangers fight.
If I should fall, my doom be also theirs,
But, if kind fortune crown me with success,
Let none e'er tread this shore and fail to meet
The beaming eye of sympathy and love,
Or unconsoled depart."

This is perhaps the only modern feature in his character, but it completes in a happy manner that beautiful figure of the youthful and noble hero which is manifest in all his words.



Virginia.

IPHIGENIA.

(*Iphigenia in Tauris.*)

No one, even of the strongest democratic tendencies, can shut his eyes to the fact that mother Nature gives her children at their birth very different qualities and capacities; that she makes one a noble, another a boor; one a hero, another a clown. And this original form of character is not easily to be changed, however much education and skill may strive to do it. It is not strange that many should strive to effect such change, for fortune is capricious, and we not unfrequently find that the groom is rocked in a princely cradle, and the prince is wrapped in rags; and of the two thus misplaced, the one is unable to fulfil the duties of his high station; the other never reaches his true position.

If, for men, this struggle upward to find their right positions is often a noble means of culture, since only through friction can the rough stone become the glittering jewel, yet, for women, such hard destiny is rarely an advantage. Happy are they whom the good God sends

into the world to take a position for which they are fitted, and where they can find a free and beautiful development!

Goethe's Iphigenia belongs to the natures born to the purple; there is something lofty, majestic, and which awakens reverence, in her youthful appearance.

As there are things to which no dust can cling to dim them, so, before her, all that is vulgar and commonplace retires. To the stately bearing of the ruler she unites the quiet dignity and modest reserve of the virgin priestess. Her figure has indeed the purity, the spotlessness of the ancient marble, its fine proportions, and power of attraction; nevertheless, no Grecian blood pulsates through it; it is wholly German and modern in the feeling that pervades it. It will live as one of the most wonderful creations of our poetry, for this very reason, that it is at the same time so near to and yet so remote from us. In the really antique figures, whether of the poet or sculptor, there is something which comes to us as a beautiful but dark riddle which we cannot solve, but here all is open to our eye. They belong to a strange world, many features of which we recognize indeed in ourselves, and which appear with the same outward manifestations, but which, on their spiritual side, bear an unfamiliar impress. We cannot forget, as we easily do, in looking upon the figures of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament, that we are separated from them by an interval of two thousand years.

It is the great change which Christianity has wrought in us, that discloses to us the secret of that which separates our Iphigenia from her ancient sisters. In the midst of her heathen surroundings, she is a representative of those ideas of humanity which Christianity, and especially Germanic Christianity, has developed. Is it not more Christian than Greek, when, showing herself to the people whose priestess destiny had made her, she appears as the compassionate deliverer of men?

"Who hath with gentle eloquence annulled,
From year to year, the usage of our sires,
By which, a victim at Diana's shrine,
Each stranger perished; thus, from certain death
Sending so oft the bondless captive home—
Call thyself useless! thou—
Thou, from whose being, o'er a thousand hearts,
A healing balsam flows."

This feature is neither ancient nor Grecian; even if she were destined to become herself a sacrifice to the pious superstitions of her people, she would scarcely express thoughts so heretical as the following:

"The heavenly deities he little knows
Who makes them thirst for blood; cruel himself,
They but reflect his spirit."

Just as little antique is that feature of thoughtful reflection which she everywhere shows, as when she expresses herself concerning the history of her family:

"How blessed is he, who his progenitors
With pride remembers—to the listener tells
The story of their greatness, of their deeds,
And, silently rejoicing, sees himself
Linked to this goodly chain! For the same stock
Bears not the monster and the demi-god.
A race, or good or evil, ushers in
The glory or the terror of the world."

On the other hand, the angry Thoas, correctly, if not flatteringly, thus describes the mode of feeling peculiar to real Grecian women:

"Then, go! The promptings of thy heart obey,
Despise the voice of reason and good counsel.
Be quite the woman, swayed by each desire
Which bridleless impels her to and fro.
When passion rages fiercely in her breast,
No sacred tie withholds her from the wretch
Who would allure her to forsake for him
A husband's or a father's guardian arms."

Among all true Grecian women, from Clytemnestra to Antigone, feeling and action, though ardent and vigorous, are naïve, spontaneous, without consciousness; while, on the other hand, our Iphigenia is never naïve, spontaneous, but always self-conscious.

Still more decidedly German and modern is the disinclination which Iphigenia shows to deception:

"Detested falsehood! It doth not relieve
The breast, like words of truth—it comforts not,
But is a torment in the forger's heart,

And, like an arrow which a god directs,
Flies back and wounds the archer."

Much more does the brisk Pylades reflect Greek modes of thought, when he seeks to overcome her disinclination with the words:

"Life teaches us
To be less strict with others, and ourselves.
Thou'lt learn the lesson too. So wonderful
Is human nature, and its varied ties
Are so involved and complicate, that none
May hope to keep his inmost spirit pure."

That Iphigenia, after some hesitation, follows the voice of her conscience; that she reveals all to the king; that she conquers him through her frankness, and receives from his magnanimity what she could not have obtained by force,—this corresponds to our German nature, but not to the Grecian spirit. It is truly great, for what she herself describes as greatness finds its right application to her own conduct:

"What call we great?
What deeds, though oft narrated, still uplift,
With shuddering horror, the narrator's soul,
But those which, with improbable success,
The valiant have attempted?—
Cunning and force, the proudest boast of man,
Fade in the lustre of her perfect truth,
Nor unrequited will a noble mind
Leave confidence so childlike and so pure."

This bears still more the impress of our own day, and of the German spirit; and this is the special merit of the poem, that the deepest and most beautiful features in the character of the heroine are so truly national, and therefore its influence upon our feelings must be permanent.





TORQUATO TASSO.

(*Torquato Tasso.*)

It is a sign of great artists that their figures, while they bear the finest individual traits, and seem to be portraits from nature, are, nevertheless, at the same time, types of a whole species, the most characteristic features of which they bring plainly to view. In like manner Goethe shows us, in Tasso, not simply the figure of that unfortunate bard whose cradle was rocked over the azure waves of the gulf of Sorrento; he shows us rather that of the race of poets, and indeed of artists, so far as they, through their talent and characteristics, belong to the idealistic class.

The distinction which Goethe makes here is as fine as it is true, for one will everywhere find that idealistic tendencies much sooner wear out their possessor, than realistic tendencies. As is well known, the ladies of the Körner circle, when "Tasso" at its first appearance was read to them at the castle, broke out with one voice in the cry, "This is Schiller to the life!" We perhaps

might with nearly equal right have said the same of all the artists of both hemispheres, and with the more truth the higher their artistic capacity.

Certainly, one would in every individual find features belonging only to him, especial peculiarities; but the fundamental features of mind and temperament, of structure and of combination, remain ever the same. What distinguishes Tasso from the majority is only the exaggeration of qualities which are common to all, but to him become peculiarities. Since he had little appreciation of the realities of life, his mind lost its even balance; his genius, like fermenting wine, burst its proper bonds, while with others it gradually becomes clear and bright, such, for example, as we admire most of all in the author of the "Tasso."

If we ask, now, after the single features of which the image of the unhappy poet is compounded, we find, first of all, a boundless susceptibility to all external impressions, an almost womanish flexibility of character, but which, unlike hers, has its origin, not in the heart, in feeling, but in fancy, ruling all the other powers of the soul. It is almost inevitable that one who possesses this characteristic should not have a certain fear of the world whose waves toss so roughly around him, a mistrust of himself, and still more of others.

Tasso knows man by poetic intuition, but he does not understand men, and rates them now too high and now too low; this feeling of uncertainty in their appreciation

is the source of his mistrust. In addition to this, is the egotism of talent, which he possessed in full measure, and which manifests itself in a thousand places. He is jealous without being properly envious, and there is a certain unsatisfiedness in his nature, but it has reference only to glory and to love. He cannot endure that one should have other gods besides himself, yet he responds only with reserve; there is much communication, but little devotion in his nature. Leonora Sanvitale says very rightly of him:

> "He loves us not; forgive me that I say so!
> From all the spheres he gathers what he loves,
> And doth invest it with the name we bear;
> His feeling we participate."

Unstable and capricious, even to excess, as a man, as an artist he has an iron persistence, cannot satisfy himself, is humble and praiseworthily modest:

> "After each slow advance he leaves his task,
> He changeth ever, and can ne'er conclude—
> His numerous rhymes he labors to combine
> Into one beautiful poetic whole."

If one often reproaches the artists with want of arrangement, discretion, moderation, patience, tenderness, and attention, indeed of devotion, which they certainly often show, one should not forget that mortals receive but a small portion of these precious qualities, and that artists consume this portion almost exclusively in their

works, so that, for the daily uses of life, very little re mains. Antonio hath well said:

"We see him now retire into himself,
As if the world were rounded in his breast:
Lost in the working of that inner world,
The outward universe he casts aside,
And his wrapt spirit, self-included, rests.
Anon, as when a spark doth fire a mine,
Upon a touch of sorrow or of joy,
Anger or whim, he breaks impetuous forth;
Now he must compass all things, all retain."

Most dangerous of all was to Tasso the petting of fortune that crowned his youthful brows with the laurel, and won for him the favor of ladies and of intellectual princes, and that raised him above the rough strifes of life. One can bear only a certain measure of prosperity; all more than this ceases to be good and turns to evil. He confesses of himself:

"In happiness,
The inborn power subsides which prompted me
To meet injustice with becoming pride,
And steadfastly to face adversity."

For the very reason that his nature is so wholly artistic, his talent possesses him, not he his talent. If Tasso is thus the foot-ball of his genius, and at last its victim, yet is his suffering meliorated, through this talent, as he so beautifully expresses himself:

"Though in their mortal anguish men are dumb,
To me a God hath given to tell my grief."

God, who gave him this, poured out the enchantment of beauty over all that he said and did, made all hearts his own, and turned even his weaknesses to his advantage with sympathetic women:

> "So, Antonio,
> One has to care for him the whole year through,
> And this care makes us love him more and more."

For his weaknesses are never mingled with envy and vulgarity. He remains always noble; if he many times errs, his soul points still toward the beautiful, as the magnet-needle to the north.

We may compassionate him, but we are never in a position to despise him. The splendor of genius shines too plainly from his brow—that laurel of which he himself said:

> "Remove it; oh, remove it from my brow!
> Take it away again; it burns my locks!"

It is in this scene of the first act that the artist has represented him, and in his picture has brought before us, as far as possible, the historical Tasso. We see in it, in the most remarkable manner, a mingling of genius with an excitable, nervous temperament; of lofty ideality and suspicious mistrust; of capriciousness and native nobility—characteristics which show half the gentleman and half the artist, and which so remarkably distinguish the creations of Goethe. Who does not recognize the poet, the artist, in that broad, imaginative brow; those arched

eyebrows; the dreamy, half-shut eye; the glance that perceives, not so much the external world as its own imaginations; the mouth, half timid, half aristocratic, and wholly eloquent; the nobly-formed nose, and the whole expression of the countenance, showing suppressed passion, and yet most attractive? It is a nature whose whole activity is that of thought, of fancy; which makes the impression of inspiration, and, for this very reason, has such power over us that we feel the God in him who speaks by his lips.





LEONORA VON ESTE.

(*Torquato Tasso.*)

Age makes us rarely more virtuous, but sometimes wiser. It is a long way from "Werter" to the "Roman Elegies," but one which not only every artist, but almost every man passes over; and, therefore, we elders may excuse it as a youthful fault, an error which Tasso twenty years later could scarcely have committed, when he prefers the princess to Leonora Sanvitale.

It is not that we are ignorant that the former did really love Tasso, and the latter loved herself and her own pleasure more, but that the temperature of the princess is twenty degrees more arctic. She is German, through and through, full of soul, as richly endowed with intellect as with feeling, and of that nobility of heart to which unselfishness, and alas! also self-renunciation, is a necessity. So constituted, one very rarely attains to prosperity and happiness. He may count himself fortunate who has a woman of such character for his wife or his patroness, but she is little fitted to be the

object of love. Leonora Sanvitale is right when she says:

"Him thou shalt have, and yet take naught from her,
For her affection to the gifted man
Doth take the hue her other passions wear;
Pale as the tranquil moon whose feeble rays
Dimly illumine the night-wanderer's path,
They gleam, but warm not, and diffuse around
No blissful rapture, no keen sense of joy.
If she but knew him happy, though afar,
She will rejoice as when she saw him daily."

In fact, she is a little old-fashioned; her wisdom has too much of the didactic tone, so that she seems better fitted to be the governess of a child than the beloved of a young poet. With what consternation does she retreat, when Tasso would commit that great offence, a kiss! and, nevertheless, she had in the innocence of her heart given him much inducement, for said she not to him?—

"But ye with violence pursue
A multitude of objects far remote,
Ye venture for eternity to act;
While we, with views more narrow, on this earth
Seek only our possession, well content
If that with constancy remain our own.—
If among men there were who knew to prize
The heart of woman, or could recognize
What treasures of fidelity and love
Are garnered safely in a woman's heart;
If the remembrance of bright single hours
Could visibly abide within your souls;
If your so searching glance could pierce the veil
Which age and wasting sickness o'er us fling;

If the possession which should satisfy
Wakened no restless cravings in your hearts,
Then were our happy days indeed arrived—
We then should celebrate our golden age."

Beautiful words, and full of hope! And when he, having become bolder, speaks of love (a secret which he would modestly express only in song), does she not respond?—

"And shall I name to thee another charm,
Which all unconsciously this song may claim?
It doth allure us still to listen to it.
We listen, and we think we understand;
We understand, and yet we censure not.
So with thy song, thou winnest us at last."

And ends still more hopefully:

"No further, Tasso! Many things there are
That we may hope to win with violence,
While others only can become our own
Through moderation and wise self-restraint.

But her tenderness has something motherly about it, almost aunt-like; and, if she were not a princess, she would, at all events, deserve the place of first governess to the court. How full of propriety are her words!—

"Wouldst thou define exactly what is fitting,
Thou shouldst apply, methinks, to noble women;
For them it most behooveth that in life
Naught should be done unseemly or unfit.
Propriety encircles with a wall
The tender, weak, and vulnerable sex.
Where moral order reigneth, women reign.

They only are despised when rudeness triumphs;
And wouldst thou, touching either sex, inquire;
'Tis order woman seeketh; freedom, man."

Does there not appear here, in contrast with the loving woman, a little too plainly, the feeling of rank, of proud separation — a feeling which chills love as much as pedantry?

As contrasted with the lovely freshness and adventurous spirit of her rival, she is full of sentiment, and therefore, in spite of the high intellectual charm which surrounds her and ennobles all that she says, appears somewhat at disadvantage. That Tasso preferred her is so far wholly in keeping, since he had absolutely no humor, and since egotistic natures repel approach; and he felt, also, that the princess loved him more for himself alone than did Leonora Sanvitale. The latter loves the poet and his fame; the former loves the man, and then his work. She is able truly to appreciate his thoughts, his feelings, which her rival is not. But if, on these grounds, he gives the preference to the princess, we may fear that the doubt she expressed had a real foundation, whether he would be happy in the quiet possession of her, and would not then be more attracted by the charms of Leonora.

Goethe shows us, in a masterly manner, how strong is her liking for the poet, by two traits: first, that she never speaks of him without defending him and taking his part; and second, that her thoughts, wherever they

wander, ever return back to him. The delicate sensibility, which everywhere shows itself in her, has doubtless something which is not sound, and is connected with her early sufferings. There is something infirm in her character, that touches our hearts. Is it not a melancholy way of confessing love, when she says of her friends?—

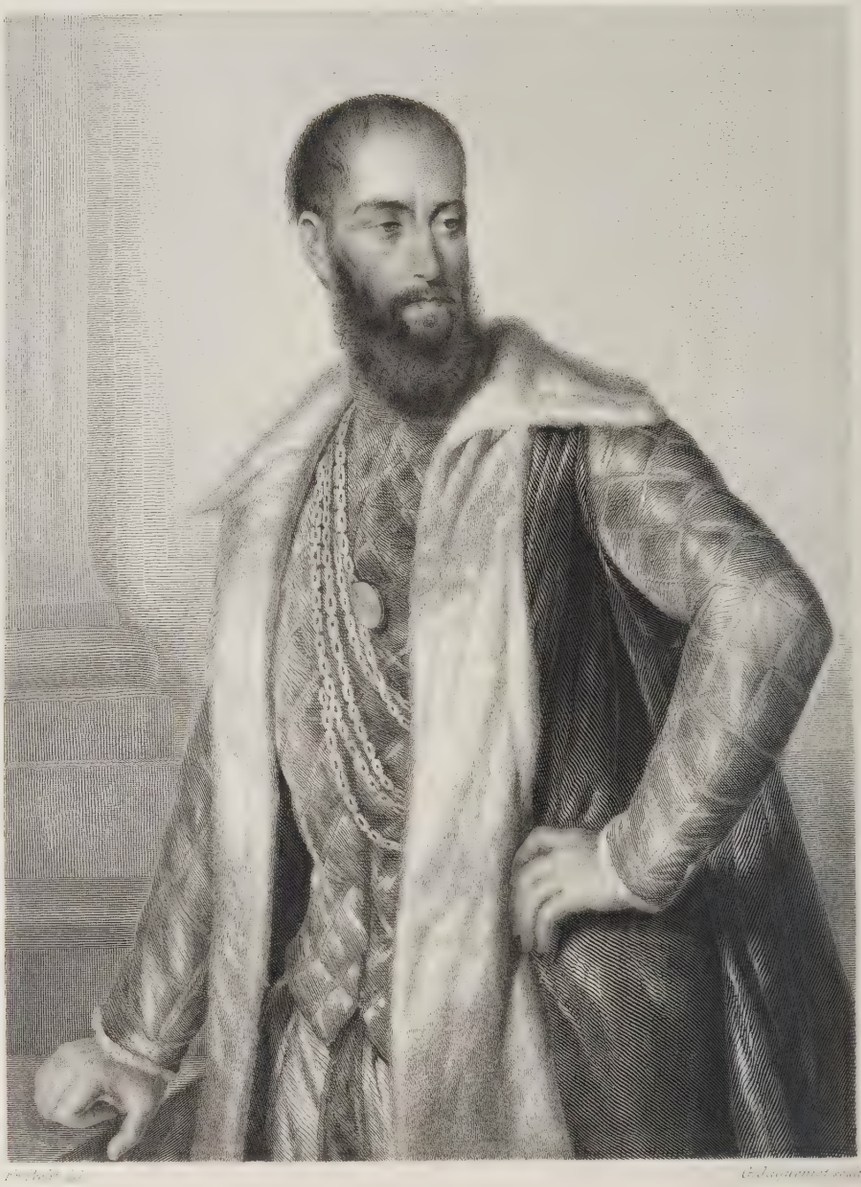
"E'en what is excellent we need must fear.
'Tis like a flame, which nobly serveth us
So long as on our household hearth it burns,
Or sheds its lustre from the friendly torch.
How lovely then! who can dispense with it?
But, if unwatched, it spreads destruction round."

And, when she is threatened with his loss, how does she paint the deep inner nature of the German woman in the following words:

"What twilight gloom now falls around my path!
The gorgeous sun, the genial light of day,
Of this fair world the splendors manifold,
Shorn of their lustre, are enveloped all
In the dark mist which now environs me!"

What a sad enchantment in these words!

This depth of nature, this tenderness without real passion, this strong inclination without ardor, this repellent loftiness of rank, the artist has wished to represent at the same time that he attempts to give again the delicate feminine image with which the poet has enriched German poesy, truly one of her most characteristic and national figures.





ANTONIO.

(*Torquato Tasso.*)

It is always an unhappy position for a man to be the object of general esteem, but not of special love. In this position we find the courtier Antonio, who displays, throughout almost the whole play, a certain moroseness of mind. It is much better for one to be fortunate than to be worthy, and the free gift of the gods charms more than the painfully-ripened fruits of hard labor. The world has no longing after the necessaries of life, for this implies toil, compulsion; but it longs after luxuries, for here we enter the realm of freedom, of beauty, of art. But what is more superfluous than poetry, and what is, at the same time, more necessary! It has thus a double attraction for us; and so Tasso, in whom fancy held unbounded sway, bore away the prizes from the worthy and sensible Antonio, not only among women, but among men.

If, with Tasso, we are always in doubt whether he is more fop or seer, on the contrary, with Antonio,

we can calculate, with almost mathematical certainty, what he will do in a given state of things. For this very reason, he interests us much less than Tasso, about whose actions we can make no calculations beforehand. The mere understanding by no means recognizes the claims of poetry. And therefore we find Antonio, with his cool, clear, dry, but acute intellect, greatly annoyed with the favor shown to Tasso in his absence. It seems to him an injustice, and that the young poet is rewarded far above his merits. From this point of view he speaks very rightly when he says:

> "But yet admit that, when some man of toil
> From irksome labor comes, with heated brow,
> Thinking to rest himself for further toil
> Beneath the longed-for shade, in the cool evening,
> And finds it in its length and breadth possessed
> Already by some idler, he may well
> Feel something human stirring in his breast.
> The world containeth many things that we
> To others freely yield and with them share;
> But there exists one treasure we resign
> With willing hearts to high desert alone:
> Another, too, that without secret grudge
> We share not even with the highest worth.
> And wouldst thou, touching these two treasures, ask?—
> They are the laurel, and fair woman's smile."

For both these will this young malapert contend with him; indeed, he has already won them, as if he were the most deserving. He takes his place boldly

with Ariosto, without waiting to see whether Italy and the world will allow that he is worthy even to unloose the shoe-latchets of that classic poet, whose fame has stood the test of a hundred years. To make a few verses does not show one to be a genius; nor are pretensions of much worth, even if recognized by some lively woman, and supported by a pair of bright eyes and a profusion of black locks. And shall this peevish lapdog be permitted, by his barking and snarling, to drive away a man of mind and of undeniable merit—a man whose person, if not attractive, is at least distinguished and manly, and who is far superior to the poet in every thing but this silly verse-making?

One must confess that Antonio, in nine hundred and ninty-nine cases, would have been wholly right; for to what court, of old or modern times, do not poor poets throng—young, "interesting" men? It is Antonio's misfortune that this was the thousandth case, and that Tasso was a true genius, one of those divinely-endowed men who are very rarely given to a nation. This being so, the matter is totally changed, and the courtier is placed wholly in the wrong. Does not one classical poet, in his influence upon the life and the historic development of a people, outweigh all the wisdom of sage councillors and diplomatists? Is all Ferrara any thing more than a flower-pot, in which the rose of his genius bloomed? Has the grand-duchy of Weimar

any other significance in the life of the German nation than this, that it was the asylum of Goethe and Schiller? And were not, nevertheless, the Weimar councillors of that day of vastly greater importance than the poor Professor Schiller, who had nothing but unpaid bills to call his own? Did they not oppose in every way the entrance of Doctor Goethe into their cabinet councils, and offer their most solemn protests against it, before God and the world, and so made themselves forever a laughing-stock? Yet, at that very time, had Goethe and Schiller written the greater part of their most popular productions, and were the national favorites long before they went to Weimar. And it may be questioned whether it was for their advantage that they went there at all. Our Tasso had not yet given to the world his "Jerusalem Delivered"—it is only just finished. And, if Italy had recognized him as a poet, how many poets are there who are famous one day and forgotten the next? Antonio, therefore, was not so much to blame, though in this case he made a sad mistake in holding a man who came with nothing more than the claim to have written an immortal poem, for a simpleton, or an impudent fellow.

But Antonio repairs his error as soon as he had marked in Tasso the signs of a high and noble mind, and Alphonso had presented the poet's case to him as a matter of state policy—a view which he could well understand—in the following noble words:

"'Tis this has made our Italy so great
That rival neighbors jealously contend
To foster and employ the noblest men."

He had more patience with the sick poet than nine-tenths of our privy-councillors would have had, even if Homer had knocked at their doors. At first he said:

"Whither doth frenzied fancy lead the boy?
And in what colors doth he picture forth
His high desert and glorious destiny!"

But when Tasso had committed his last and greatest folly, he says:

"In thine extremity I will not leave thee."

We have endeavored to defend Antonio against the disfavor which generally meets him when he is brought simply into comparison with Tasso and his lofty genius. How open he is to sharp criticism, from this point of view, appears plainly from the poet's own words:

"Still hath his formal wisdom fretted me,
His proud assumption of the master's tone,
Careless to learn whether the listener's mind
Does not itself the better track pursue.
He tutors thee in much which thou thyself
More truly, deeply feelest; gives no heed
To what thou sayest, and perverts thy words."

We find Antonio clearly characterized in the first dialogue between him and Tasso, and which awakens the poet's anger. Is he rude, proud, reserved, self-con-

tained, yet is he a polite courtier, skilled in the ways of the world and its customs. In his youth a favorite of women, he has not yet lost their favor, though no longer young. It is women who best understand how wholly unlike he and Tasso are:

> "Only mark of each
> The outward aspect, countenance, and tone,
> Look, gesture, bearing—every thing opposed.
> 'Tis not here
> A misconception 'twixt congenial minds;
> Two men they are
> Who, therefore, are opposed,
> Because their minds are cast in different moulds."



the contrary, he generally repels men, as we see in Antonio, who plays the part of a man knowing the world, against the richly-endowed Tasso. The demeanor of women in the presence of a genius is one greatly varying: the most love him really only on account of his weakness, or of the glory which proceeds from him, and is reflected upon them; only a few love him on account of the heavenly flame itself.

To the first class belongs Lady Leonore Sanvitale, in whom the poet pictures to us so glorious a counterpart to the Princess Leonore. She is, in fact, a feminine realist, as is seen by the way in which she sets forth the reasons why women love Tasso:

"In our own province he requires our aid;
A thousand things he needs, which to supply
Is to no woman an unwelcome task.
The fine-spun linen, the embroidered vest,
He weareth gladly; and endureth not
Upon his person aught of texture rude,
Such as befits the menial.
Not from a journey e'er returneth home,
But a third portion of his goods is lost;
His valet plunders him, and thus, Antonio,
The whole year round, one has to care for him."

When she speaks of his laurels, she shows still more her practical turn of mind:

"How! hath yon chaplet round our stripling's brow
Given umbrage to the grave, experienced man?
His worshippers, with barren homage, bring
As tribute meet a fruitless branch, that thus

With ease they may acquit them of their debt.
Thou dost not grudge the martyr's effigy,
The golden radiance round the naked head;
And certes, where it rests, the laurel-crown
Is more a sign of sorrow than of joy."

She speaks here the true thought of her heart; a compassionate feeling is mingled with her admiration, and her love is of a very egoistic kind:

"How charming is it in his mind's clear depths
One's self to mirror! Doth not every joy
Seem doubly great and noble when his song
Wafts us aloft, as on the clouds of heaven?
Then, first, thy lot is worthy to be envied!
Not only hast thou what the many crave,
But each one knoweth what thou art and hast.
What rapture, in the golden prime of life,
To feel his presence!
Still art thou young, still happy, when the round
Of changeful time shall long have borne thee on."

One sees she lends her money at good interest. She is better fitted to be the muse of Ariosto than of a Tasso, to distribute garlands than laurels, to enchant and to intoxicate more than to inspire. She is as proud of her noble birth as she is brilliant. How lofty her words when she says:

"Florence is great and noble, but the worth
Of all her treasured riches doth not reach
The prouder jewels that Ferrara boasts.
That city to her people owes her power—
Ferrara grew to greatness through her princes!"

She can barely brook a plebeian poet or painter, and that only when he has become famous, and is still young and handsome. It remains a question whether the poet fared so badly with this glorious Italian woman—this voluptuous, sun-embrowned flower of that enchanted land. Women are never so thankful to any one, after their dress-maker, as to the poet or the painter who perpetuates their charms, especially if he has received favors at their hands, and for this would Lady Leonore willingly take care.

It is familiarly said that Goethe has embodied in Tasso many of his own experiences, and it is said with truth; but in reading it we feel much more as if we were sitting in the Weimar Park at twilight, and hearing the nightingale sing, than breathing the intoxicating odors of the oranges and myrtles of Belriguardo. But, if one asserts that Lady von Stein was the original of Leonore Sanvitale, we may very confidently contradict it. Leonore is a genuine foreign product, growing up so perfect and luxuriant, so pleasure-loving and pleasure-giving, in the golden Roman sunlight, and not in the moist moonlight of Weimar. This mingling of cool reflection and of glowing sensibility, of natural coquetry and of subtle calculation; the shrewd and unimaginative but splendid and magnanimous character; the pride and charm of beauty which characterize all that she does and says,—these qualities belong only to the happy nature of the South—they are Roman reminiscences.

How well she makes her calculations, we see when she says:

> "Italia boasts no great, no mighty name,
> This princely mansion hath not called its guest.
> In fostering genius we enrich ourselves:
> Dost thou present her with a friendly gift,
> One far more beautiful she leaves with thee."

She means hereby the gift of immortality. It is among the proud women of Paul Veronese and Titian, who, through the charms of their southern beauty, can change our colder galleries into the enchanted gardens of Armida, that the artist may best look for her archetype.



Faust

FAUST.

(*Faust.*)

This masterpiece of the poet appears to us like one of our glorious Gothic cathedrals that, with all its pomp and greatness, was left unfinished, and has been completed by the addition of a modern structure in the academic Greek style—a necessary and useful conclusion, but not in harmony with the original structure. Such an addition is the second part of "Faust." We shall, therefore, restrain ourselves from pouring our rivulet into the ever-swelling flood of Faustian literature, nor shall we expatiate upon the significance of this immortal work, for it is ever a thankless task to carry water to the sea. Whoever wants criticism, may turn himself to the critics. We confine ourselves to the justification of the figures which are here the subjects of artistic representation, and begin with the chief figure, perhaps the most significant which Goethe, or indeed German poetry, has ever produced.

If Faust had this preëminence, he owes it doubtless

to the circumstance that in him the genius of our nation, in its most essential features, finds its truest representative. With no other people are the inclination to lofty speculation, the wish to understand human nature and its destiny, and to know the origin of all things, so strong as with the Germans. Faust has a wholly national impress. He is the type of all that is most peculiar to us. That he has become such a type is owing to the poet alone, and not to any popular traditions. It is only in the myth of Prometheus, and in the biblical narrative of Jacob, who wrestled with God, that we find a counterpart of the struggles in which Faust takes part, and in which he appears to us as the representative of humanity—the man around whom good and evil spiritual powers are striving; those powers which are personified to us in the Lord, and in Mephistopheles. It is the struggle which goes on in the heart of every man, and to which the poet here gives an objective reality.

Merely as a perfect man, Faust would have been an unpoetical abstraction. The poet does not, therefore, make him a colorless representative of the race, but he gives him a local habitation, plants him upon German soil, assigns to him a definite period of time, and attributes to him certain traits of person and character in which we may be interested. Thus, he is more to us than an intellectual abstraction—he awakens our sympathy in highest measure. Having fellow-feeling

with him as a man, we are deeply interested in his struggles, although our understanding may very imperfectly apprehend them. It is the part of true art, that it offers something of interest to every one, and, beyond all works of German poetry, Faust does this in the highest degree. There is no rank, no age, no stage of culture, which does not find in this wonderful creation some material for enjoyment and delight.

We love that only which is personal, or which has human elements, and in this respect the poet has taken care that Faust shall not be wanting. He comes before us as a learned German of the middle ages, as a university professor—

"Who is called magister, is indeed called doctor."

We find him moving in a narrow circle, to which his boundless intellectual strivings form a tragic antithesis. Conformably to his position, the artist shows him to us, shut up in an abhorred and musty room:

"Where heaven's dear light itself doth pass
But dimly through the painted glass;
Girt round with volumes thick with dust,
A prey to worms and mouldering rust;
And to the high vault's topmost bound,
With smoky paper compassed round;
Boxes in strange confusion hurled,
Glasses and antique lumber blent,
With many a curious instrument,—
This is my world—a precious world."

Since he had had scholars "already for ten years," we must conclude that he was about thirty years old, in the prime of his manhood, "too old to play, too young to be without desire." As a true student, he is poor, and, as he complains, has little skill to comprehend the world in whose joys he might have been able to forget his pain. A mere pedant, or even a mere abstract thinker, would scarcely draw our attention. There needs for this a warm, passionate nature, one appreciating all that is noble and beautiful; the nervous eloquence in which it may give utterance to its griefs and awaken a sympathetic response; the power of will, a fearless heart, a penetrating intellect: thus is he made to us, a true and lofty-minded man:

"From heaven he claims its brightest star,
From earth demands its highest good;
Nor can their gathered treasures soothe to rest
The cravings of his agitated breast."

Even the restless impatience with which he rejects the long, tedious way of induction, and strives after supernatural knowledge, attracts us:

"That I may recognize the hidden ties
That bind creation's inmost energies;
Her vital powers, her embryo seeds survey,
And fling the trade in empty words away."

Thus, also, he expresses in moving terms the discord in his breast:

"Two souls, alas! are lodged in my breast,
Which struggle there for undivided reign;

One to the world, with obstinate desire
And closely-cleaving organs, still adheres;
Above the mist the other doth aspire
With sacred vehemence to purer spheres."

He longs for revelation, and turns him to the Scriptures, but even yet his doubts are not appeased. In our picture, he is represented as sitting with the holy book open before him, when his attention is called to the noise of the poodle behind the oven.

What makes Faust dear to us, and disposes us to forgive the crimes which he commits in company with Mephistopheles, is the loftiness of his mind; his purposes, honorable even amidst his gusts of passion; his warmth of disposition and tenderness to all, and the fearlessness with which he explores the world of spirits, as well as the depths of the human heart. There are in his character, so compounded, qualities truly German; and they are the means of his salvation, since, in the tumult of the senses into which Mephistopheles casts him, he ceases not to honor natural beauty, and what is noble and lovely, wherever he meets it. He succeeds, at last, in his incessant strife, to reconcile the opposites which exist in all possible human relations; to reconcile reason and understanding, mind and matter, idealism and realism; and he does this by seeing how they mutually limit each other, and thus comes to the knowledge of the limitations of freedom, as he expresses it, at the end of the second part.





MARGARET—(GRETCHEN).

(*Faust.*)

If in Faust the loftiest struggle of the human spirit is represented, so in Margaret is the modest self-restraint of love. The inclination of this simple nature to one so wholly unlike her own, so high and aspiring, forms a most attractive contrast—a contrast so true, and, at the same time, so tragic, that Goethe cannot possibly have originated it, but owes it to his observation of life. Here, if anywhere, he sets forth what has really been, and moulds it into the highest forms of artistic beauty.

If we should follow the lead of most of our actresses, we should suppose Margaret to be a very soft, sentimental, and weak girl, who occupies herself chiefly with reflections upon the condition of her little heart when she is not busy in washing and knitting. This comprehension of the character is very modern, but in no degree corresponds to the conception of the poet. In his delineation, Margaret appears to us as of a wholly naïve nature, who likes any thing else better than to reflect upon her

own feelings, but who expresses them as they arise with the freedom and warmth of an ardent soul. The assurance of instinct is so strong, the impulse of her nature so lofty, that she acts without consideration, and reflects only after the deed is done. This naturalness of character it is which Goethe describes in such a masterly way, and which gives to her such an incomparable freshness. She is of so transparent a nature, so purely truthful and innocent, that she cannot conceive how any one can be otherwise; and, when she is at last convinced of this, she feels for such a double-minded and deceitful person the deepest abhorrence. She learned to know, in Mephistopheles, that there may be much reflection with little feeling, and still less benevolence, and that the secret and reserved person may have great advantage over him who is open and frank. The simplicity and ingenuousness of her character manifest themselves best in her relations to persons. Toward these she has no middle feeling. Between like and dislike, esteem and aversion, there is no interval, because her feelings rule in her judgments, and not the cool and calculating understanding. She is inclined to be severe toward those from whom she is repelled.

In this strong predominance of feeling lies the danger of her fall, for all her heart is in that which she thinks or does, and she knows no higher duty than to yield to love, without condition or reserve. Every other consideration vanishes away. The manner, however, in which she ex-

presses this is so attractive in its loveliness, and reveals such richness of heart, and is so free from every selfish emotion, that we are irresistibly charmed. She gives to the beloved one all that she can, the best that she has, even herself. As she lives for him, so would she die for him. There lies in this joy of sacrifice something inexpressibly touching. How beautiful seems her anxiety for the safety of Faust's soul! Faith in God and faith in her lover are melted together in one, and, since she is not able to fill up the chasm between them, she perishes in her despair.

If such an energetic nature is ever in itself poetic, Goethe strengthens the charm through the innocence and inexperience with which he invests her. At the most, Margaret is but sixteen—it is scarcely possible to think her older. Any deficiency in intellect or wit is compensated by the most precious of all womanly gifts, the benevolence and sweetness of a warm heart, which beautify all that she says and does.

With her innocence is closely connected the purity and grace of her whole character. They doubly please us, because they are the mirror of an unspotted soul. And, nevertheless, to this guilelessness is joined the least trace of coquetry, or how otherwise should she have said when she received the jewels?—

> "I can't in them at church appear,
> Nor in the street, nor anywhere."

Persons of feeling are especially led captive by that which strikes their fancy. It is the strange, the distinguished, the bold, which first strikes her in Faust:

"I would give something now to know
Who yonder gentleman could be;
He had a gallant air, I trow,
And doubtless was of high degree.
That from his noble brow I told,
Nor would he else have been so bold."

Curiosity first fixed her thoughts upon him, and the fancy once occupied could no more be withdrawn, as she naïvely expressed it in the words—

"But I must own that then I scarcely knew
What in your favor here began to plead.
Yet I was angry with myself, indeed,
That I more angry could not feel with you."

Every strong nature feels in some degree the power of the senses. This was the case with Margaret, pure as she was, and unconscious of the same, and therefore the more defenceless:

"Best man, when thou dost look at me,
I know not what moves me to do thy will."

When with him, she reasoned no more; she had no will but his.

The artist has brought her before us in the scene where she comes out of the church, and, having been addressed by Faust, had dismissed him with a charming

disdain. Notwithstanding this, she is not able to restrain herself from looking after him. Since she dwelt in the suburb, she could easily visit the little church upon the height from which one can survey the whole city.

We see Margaret, not only in her dewy splendor, but in the night of misfortune that came down upon her. A nature so simple as hers, must, with a Faust, come to misery—it is her inevitable lot. She can as little resist him as make him constant, and she is unable to lose him without being herself destroyed by the loss. The poet so sets forth this necessary bond of suffering, that the heart is shocked to see how mother, brother, child, are drawn into the abyss, till, for the poor, wretched one, even the night of madness is a kindness and alleviation of her misery. That she also even now has an instinctive feeling that she must repent of her sin, and, in spite of her love, leave Faust to bear the punishment, is as deeply grounded in the honesty and truthfulness of her nature, as it is only poetically just that the crime which her boundless love made her commit should be forgiven her through the mercy of God, because of this love, and her voluntary repentance.



H. Lemmel sculp.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

(*Faust.*)

"Two souls dwell, alas! in my breast." Every man has in himself two voices, which continually contradict each other; our understanding and fancy, sensibility and reason, are in eternal strife. If the half of our nature believes, loves, hopes, creates, it pleases the other half to do just the opposite: to mock, to criticise, deny, and destroy. It is capable of no lofty impulse, and lives only for the sensible world around it. In a word, it is realism in opposition to idealism, and we cherish them both in their increasing antagonism without being able ever to reconcile them, while the sole preponderance of either would lead us to destruction. For even realism, although it represents the earthly part of our nature, the material, the finite, the perishable, and under certain relations the sinful, is nevertheless the necessary counterpoise and condition of our existence. It is our task to resolve these antagonisms.

It was a hazardous undertaking in Goethe to bring

forward Mephistopheles in his relations to Faust, and his success is a striking proof of his artistic power, and of his mastery over all his materials.

Art has permitted itself at all times to personify conceptions. The Olympus of all nations is such a personification of natural forces by the poet. This is permissible, certainly, only in the case when, out of the empty shadow, as with Mephistopheles, comes forth a real living being with an independent life, so that it everywhere appears as a person, and it needs a strong effort of the understanding to resolve it again into its abstract elements.

If Mephistopheles is no mere abstraction, but has distinct individual features, and the warm, quick life-blood pulsates through his veins, yet in him we see but an impersonation of the most absolute egoism. Who has not had a friend of such a type at some time, if not one so fully developed in all his features? Mephistopheles owes his vital power, however, especially to that endowment of humor which the poet has given him. He represents the realistic in us, and the corporeal; the material is his favorite theme:

> "In full, fresh cheeks I take the greatest satisfaction.
> A corpse will never find me in the house;
> I love to play as puss does with the mouse."

He hates all striving after the knowledge of the supersensual, but there is no bitterness in his negations.

His wit even helps us, because he never merely mocks, lies, and deceives; and we ever find a truth, although it may be one-sided, which, with its sarcasms, like a stroke of lightning, opens to view new and wide regions in our natures. It is true that, immediately after, we stand in deeper darkness, as those blinded; still, the feeling remains that even this mode of vision is not without its good results. Naturally, this wit, so destructive, almost always appears in the forms of common-sense utterances, as the passage shows in which he is brought before us by the artist:

"I say it to thee, I, a fellow who speculates."

Junker Voland has here attained to that turning-point where the frivolous life-philosophy seduces the impatient one, who will not endure the long and laborious path of knowledge. Naturally, Mephistopheles appeared as one who has passed through the process of culture, at which Faust is still laboring, and has convinced himself of its fruitlessness:

"Oh! credit me, who still, as ages roll,
Have chewed this bitter food from year to year,
No mortal from the cradle to the bier
Digests the ancient leaven."

Gentlemanly nonchalance, elegant manners, and superior knowledge of the world, are imposing to the embarrassed German student, though he may not be conscious of it, and it is therefore in keeping that

Mephistopheles, at his second visit to the doctor, should not appear as before, when he excited Faust's laughter as a "travelling scholar," but as a "noble youth in a gold-laced scarlet vest, and a mantle of heavy silk, a cock's gay feather for a plume, and a long and pointed rapier." The poet had already represented him as witty, because wit is much more penetrating and effective than cold, dry sophistry, since, the keener it is, the more deeply does it impress itself on the memory. The witty man, from his freedom and unrestraint, takes the place of superiority. What we laugh at has in a measure ceased to control us.

The indispensable characteristics of the Junker are cleverness; a bold carriage; a cold, worldly, and fickle nature; a sly, watchful, penetrating eye. We picture him also as long and thin, nervous and quick in his movements, an admirable fencer. Corpulence is a sign of contentment and good-nature, and therefore little fits Mephistopheles, that "all-digesting devil." The reasoning faculty, of which he is a type, is indeed the direct opposite of good-nature. The intellect, "which always denies," must have thick, curled, and flowing hair, and the Perverse One reveals himself in his beard and eyebrows. Gretchen says of him:

> "As his loathed visage, in my life before,
> Naught to my heart e'er gave a pang so great."

But it is not necessary that he be supremely ugly;

only such ugliness as may belong to one with a distinguished exterior and a vulgar mind. The seven deadly sins may be written upon a face that was once beautiful, and a fallen angel must have been once an angel. A powerful, highly-endowed nature can have all its noble qualities perverted, as love becomes hate, and wine is turned to vinegar. Faust, in a not very complimentary mood, named him a "monstrous birth of filth and fire," and he takes pleasure in giving himself out as a genius. This harmonizes well with the conception of cold fire, or the union of a cold disposition with the warmth of positive hate against every thing that is noble — the feeling of one who has apostatized from goodness, and yet recognizes its worth. Since Mephistopheles leaves all manual labor to his servants, he may well lay claim to a finely-shaped hand, even if a little too thin and long and talon-like. The consciousness of power gives its possessor a peculiar appearance of assurance, which is never at fault, and which is only tinged with bitterness when there is the consciousness of a power above him which cannot be resisted, but may be satirized; and it is in this spirit that Mephistopheles speaks when he says of the Lord:

"The Ancient One I like sometimes to see;
And, not to break with Him, am always civil.
'Tis courteous in a Lord so great as He
To speak so kindly even to the Devil."



HELENA.

(*Faust.*)

We now come to that most unique work, to that intricate garden of error, upon which commentators, critics, logomachists, and learned pedants, have exercised all their acuteness. As the angel with the flaming sword guarded the entrance into Paradise, so do they forbid all entrance into the secret sanctuary of the second part of "Faust," except to those whose locks are as thickly powdered with learned dust as their own perukes.

To this prohibition we shall willingly yield; for the society of the blessed, who wander about in this symbolic Elysium, has something too fantastic and ghost-like not to inspire a feeling of dread, especially when sphinxes at the door threaten to devour every one who is not an Œdipus. But, since we would bring ruin to no creature by a fortunate guess, and least of all to such sphinxes, to compel them to cast themselves into that abyss of *ennui* which they have made to yawn before others, we gladly restrain ourselves to catching a glimpse here and there through the gates, without entering the paradise itself.

We are satisfied, also, to be shown the lofty form of that famous woman who seems destined through her beauty to be the cause of continual evil. Not only did she cost the Greeks much blood, but what hosts of German doctors, and their armies of unfledged pupils, have sweated and toiled for centuries in trying to translate her tragic destiny told by Homer into the rugged metres of our well-beloved German! Oh! unhappy destiny of the most lovely woman of the world, to be sued for by kings and heroes, and to fall at last to be the prey of Suabian and Saxon schoolmasters and their imps, and finally to be even slandered in the grave, by so famous an æsthetic as Vischer, as one that had never had more than a pasteboard existence!

Alas! we, also, are compelled to confess that we do not hold that bold declaration of our famous countryman for a baseless calumny, since the frivolous conduct which distinguishes the princess in her relations to Faust plainly is not sufficient to put beyond doubt the identity of her person with that of the Trojan princess, for in this matter she has too many helpers who might, with good ground, claim the same title for themselves.

Let us, then, confine ourselves to the testimony of those who have seen much more clearly than we through the symbolic lattices, and listen to the testimony of the imperial court, where she first made her appearance, and which in its way pays to her the most characteristic homage:

"ELDERLY LADY. Shapely and tall—only the head too small.
YOUNGER. Look at the foot—'tis clumsy, after all.
DIPLOMATIST. I have seen princesses from head to foot—
I do pronounce her beauty absolute.
COURTIER. Softly she steals to where he sleeping is—
She glides away on light foot; he awakes.
LADY. Looks back—I thought so, I make no mistakes.
COURTIER. And now she turns to him with such calm grace.
LADY. I see there's a new pupil in the case—
In such things all men are so very dull!
Poor lad! he fancies he's the first she has taught.
KNIGHT. What dignity! so calmly beautiful!
LADY. A vile, coarse wretch! no better than she ought.
PAGE. O that I were in that young shepherd's place!
COURTIER. Who would not in a net like this be caught!
LADY. The gem from time to time, with many a one,
Has been from hand to hand still shifted on;
The gilding rubbed off many a year ago.
ANOTHER LADY. From ten years old she has been but so-so.
KNIGHT. Yes, fortune favored them; yet how divine
The precious relic! would that it were mine!"

Later returning to her father's house, she calls herself one "much wondered at and much reproved," and continues:

"Since the day I left this place,
Without one grief, have many things occurred
That men love to spread far and wide; but he of whom
Such acts are told loves not to hear the still-increasing rumor,
Where his own acts become a fairy tale."

She passes quickly over all the dark points of her history; nevertheless, she shows herself not only kindly but magnanimous when she says further:

"Jove's daughter, common fear doth not beseem;
Light terrors pass her by and touch her not."

In like manner she knows how to accomplish all with decorous deportment, although Phorcyas maliciously says of her:

"Old is the word, but high and true its import,
That Modesty and Beauty never, hand in hand,
Together walk over the earth's green path."

Old women are permitted more liberty of speech than others, and so we must pardon her observations of this kind. To speak honestly, the suite of the queen appeared to us much more graphically drawn than she herself. Goethe has been successful in describing this flock of lambs with a humor worthy of his best days:

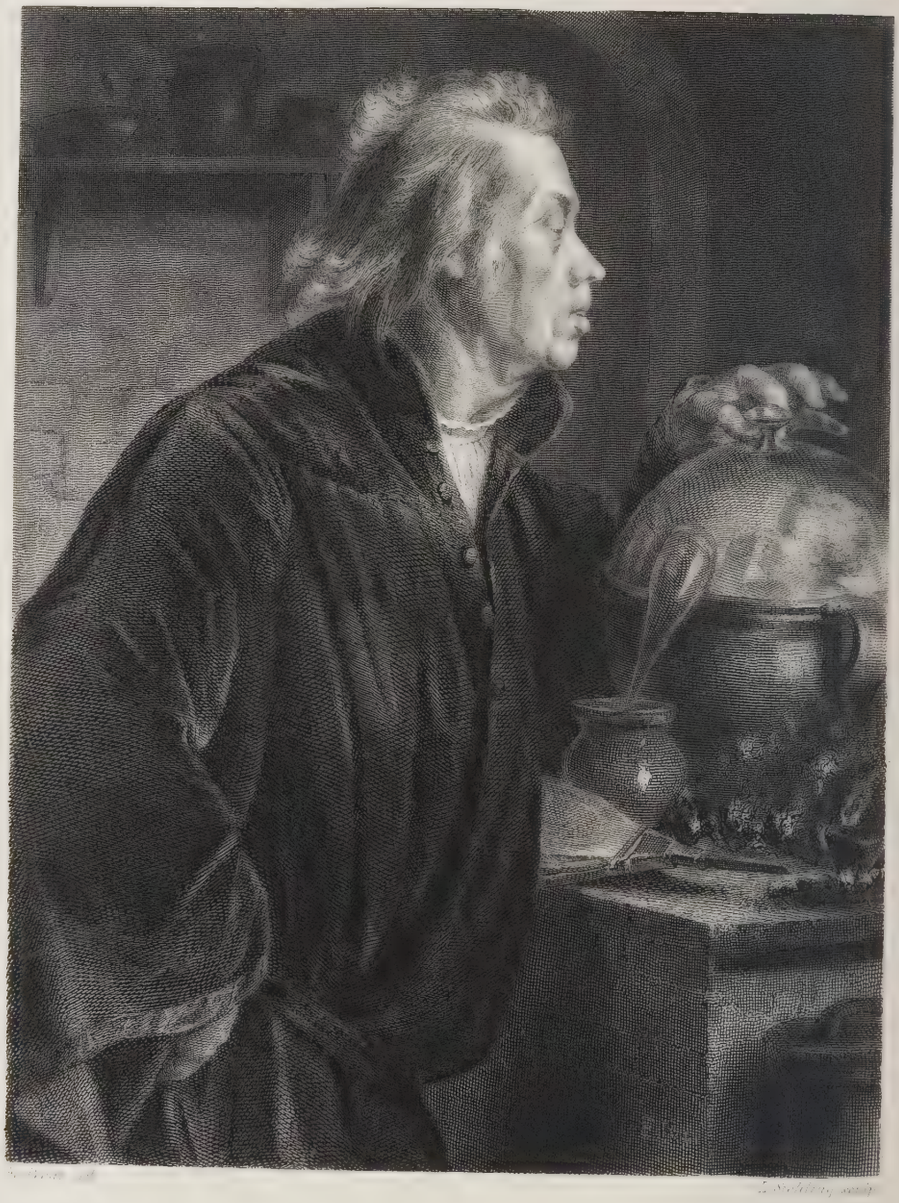
"Impatient ever, and foolish! Type of women
Dependent on the moment-play of the wild winds!
Good or ill fortune, still incapable
Of meeting with serenity.
Still warring are you each with other; one
Says this, and what she says is straight gainsaid.
Laughing or wailing, the self-same tone 'tis always—
Sorrow or joy."

In this way, history loses itself in a mystico-allegoric cloud, in which one no longer knows whether he stands on his feet or on his head.

It is one of the most humbling observations which one has occasion to make in the course of his life, that he possesses nothing permanently, not even that which seems

to be most really his own—the faculty of production. What we knew yesterday, we know it not perfectly to-day, and are by no means sure that we shall continue to know it to-morrow. That Greek wise man who so confidently asserted that he carried about all his property with him, egregiously deceived himself, for even by the way he had perhaps lost the half. In like manner, has Goethe shown, in the second part of "Faust," little of that glorious capacity of creating immortal forms with charms inexpressible, and of that energy of life which has made the first part a favorite book of his nation for all time.

But, with all its faults, it has such a fulness of profound wisdom, of sharp observation of men, and of sunny humor, that from it ten ordinary poets could splendidly adorn themselves. The richest experience of life reveals to us its treasures; wickedness in its most lovely forms shows everywhere its roguish visage, and alternates with the deepest earnestness. The thinker, agreeable and intellectual, compels our attention, even if the poet is no more able to arouse and excite us. For this reason, time is gradually teaching us that, if the second part of "Faust" is not such a picture of life as was the first, yet is it a treasure-house filled with the most precious life-experiences.



Wright



WAGNER.

(*Faust.*)

Science and wisdom are such heavy burdens, that one must frequently make use of the ass to carry them; even camels may sometimes be used for this service. One need only go into one of the best of our German university cities, to be convinced in every street of the striking truth of our assertion. How they pant, and puff, and blow, and make every one know what inestimable treasures they are carrying! what consciousness of immeasurable separation between them and common cattle, shows itself in the proud, mulish dignity with which they walk about!

There is, confessedly, a marked distinction between those who first bring to light the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, and those who carry them around and peddle them out to the young by weight and measure. To these last venders of science belongs that admirable man who, as the perfect opposite of King Midas, turns all the gold that he touches to dead paper

and thrashed straw. Faust calls the learned gentleman, a little rudely, a "soulless groveller," and says of him:

"How he alone is ne'er bereft of hope,
Who clings to tasteless trash with zeal untired;
Who doth with greedy hand for treasure grope,
And, finding earthworms, is with joy inspired!"

These men have a peculiar power of emptying of all life that with which they occupy themselves; they reduce every thing to recipes, and, for the latter especially, have a true zeal; believe themselves able to cure therewith not only individuals, but the state, and are full of confidence that their medicines can never fail. But, in relation to his master, the *famulus* is very modest, and makes scarcely any pretension to govern the world:

"When in his study pent, the whole year through,
Man views the world as through an optic glass
On a chance holiday, and scarcely then,
How by persuasion can he govern men?—
Still, as I prosecute with earnest zeal
The critic's toil, I'm haunted by this thought,
And vague misgivings o'er my spirit steal."

Yet, as compared with men at large, he looks upon himself as one of the elect:

"Yet surely 'tis delightful to transport
One's self into the spirit of the past;
To see before us how a wise man thought,
And what a glorious height we've reached at last."

All learned pedants are vain, and so grasps he also after every kind of distinction, if it is only this, to walk with a famous man:

"Sir doctor, in a walk with you,
There's honor and instruction too;
With what emotions must your heart o'erflow,
Receiving thus the reverence of the crowd!
Great man! how happy who like you doth know
Rightly to use the gifts by Heaven bestowed!"

To whom the master replies:

"But 'tis our inborn impulse, deep and strong,
To rush aloft, to struggle still toward heaven."

Again, Wagner expresses his whole character, his total want of fancy, when, misunderstanding Faust, he answers:

"To strange conceits myself at times must own,
But impulse such as this I ne'er have known.
Nor woods nor fields can long our thoughts engage;
Their wings I envy not, the feathered kind—
Far otherwise, the pleasures of the mind
Bear us from book to book, from page to page."

In the first part of the tragedy we have but a lightly-sketched outline of the man, in all the narrowness of his nature—one to whom all fresh organic life is an abomination, and all wisdom is only cramming of the memory; but in the second part he reappears fully developed, and, emerging from the shadow of his master,

shines by his own light, so that Mephistopheles says of him:

"The well-known Doctor Wagner—anyhow
The great man of the world of letters now:
His genius 'tis that all inspires, unites,
While Science mounts with him to prouder heights.
There gathers round his chair an eager ring
Of hearers—men who would learn every thing.
He, like St. Peter, holds the keys—can show
The secrets of above and of below.
He shines in all, no reputation is
In any way to be compared to his—
None anywhere now to be placed with him.
Even Faustus' fame's beginning to grow dim—
He has made the great discoveries of our days."

Here he first begins to declare war against the principle of life, and to substitute machines for organic forms, as the *famulus* tells us:

"Intent on the great work, he has lived alone
For months in the stillest stillness. Only think,
Think of this neatest, nattiest of all
Our bookmen, blacked with soot from ear to nose;
And his eyes blearing, and their raw, red blink,
As with throat parching at the fire he blows."

It is as thus at work that the artist brings him before us, when he lifts up the cover and sees the Homunculus whom he had brewed. His success, indeed, is owing to the help of the devil, and the poor fellow cannot get rid of the retorts; but he asserts it, nevertheless, to be the triumph of science:

"The tender point from which life sprang and started
Is gone—clean gone, the glory all departed.
The eager impulse from within that pressed,
Received, and gave, and, prompt to manifest
Itself, went on advancing by degrees,
The nearest first, the foreign next to seize,
Is from its dignity deposed, dethroned.—
Hope for the world dawns then, that, having laid
The stuff together of which man is made,
The hundred-fold ingredients mixing, blending
(For upon mixture is the whole depending);
If, then, in a retort we slowly mull it,
Next, to a philosophic temper dull it;
Distil and redistil, at leisure thin it,
All will come right, in silence, to a minute.
'Tis forming—every second brings it nearer,
And my conviction becomes stronger, clearer;
What Nature veils in mystery I expect,
Through the plain understanding, to effect:
What was organization will at last
Be with the art of making crystals classed."

That Wagner undertakes this, is, perhaps, the best incident of the whole second part, and the justification of his attempt, just cited, is wholly in the arrogant spirit of modern science, with its boundless but cloudy pretensions. Homunculus himself gives to its representatives some very good counsel:

"And you—oh!.you at home may stay
The main pursuit of life, as now pursuing.
Spread the old parchments out as you are doing,
The scattered elements of life collect,
Combine them as the recipes direct;

In nothing from the letter deviate thou;
Think of the 'what,' but still more of the 'how.'
While o'er a section of the world I fly,
To hit, perhaps, the dot upon the 'i'
The triumph's won, the mighty work attained,
The well-earned meed of thousand efforts gained:
Gold, honor, reputation, long life, health,
Science, perhaps, and virtue, surely wealth.
Farewell!"



P. Perrin del.

P. Lamontagne sculp.

WILHELM MEISTER.

(*Wilhelm Meister.*)

One of the most common fancies of the aged author is, that he understands the productions of his youth better than at the time he wrote them. This seems to have been the case with Goethe in his "Wilhelm Meister," when he asserted in a literary journal that he wished to show in him an example "how a man often attempts to do that for which Nature has given him no capacity or skill, but how it is possible that all his abortive efforts may lead to that inestimable benefit which consists in a wide human culture." But it seems to us, as to many critics, that this supposed leading thought of the work had originally no place in it, and is added as an afterthought.

In its first six books, those which were written before the Italian journey, we find at least no traces of this, from whence it is highly probable that it was interpolated later; but these first six books constitute the romance. The continuation, written ten years later, is, with few ex-

ceptions, much poorer, and by no means corresponds to its brilliant beginning; indeed, it wrongs and mars it. Single beautiful episodes, as the "Confessions of a Pure Soul," which might as well appear in any other book as in "Wilhelm Meister," or the touching narrative of Mignon's parents, but which also scarcely found place in the first outline, cannot deceive us concerning the weakness of the rest; we have therefore confined ourselves exclusively to those six books in our delineation of single characters.

Perhaps it is the hero of the book who has done most to confirm the impression that Goethe intended to show in him a young man who, with a decided inclination for dramatic art, develops himself into an artist. The prominent feature in his character is, that he is characterless, that he has no distinctive personality, and thus is admirably fitted for a player. A more changeable and impressible man can scarcely be found than Wilhelm; his heart is like a mirror, continually reflecting the outer world, but which retains no definite image, although his noble and benevolent nature reflects this outer world on its most beautiful side, preserves him from every thing vulgar, and procures him our sympathy in spite of his weakness. A master, like Goethe, would scarcely have delineated Wilhelm thus without a purpose. In favor of this is the circumstance that, in one trait of his character, he represents him stable in his love for art. For this he shows the greatest enthusiasm and holds it fast with his whole soul,

while from every thing else he is quickly diverted and turned aside. This defect of character does harm in proportion to the nobility of his nature. This is the most plainly seen in his relations to women, to whom his amiable devotion, which has its root in his weakness, becomes very dangerous. His first conquest is Marianne, with whom he revels in the intoxication of love, and leaves her without any sufficient proof of her guilt. We see him, for a couple of months afterward, entangled in the net of Philena without any strong resistance. He exchanges her in a few weeks for the countess, and, after an outbreak of fiery passion, she is also forgotten, and the flame breaks out anew for the Amazon. Then he is betrothed to Therese, *de raison*, only still once more, after she had given her consent, to exchange her for Natalie.

All this is described with wonderful skill, and beyond doubt is not only very possible, but also, with a person of great fascination, very probable, yet, nevertheless, it indicates a light, changeable, theatrical nature, which transforms life into a play, and covets something new every day. Another feature of his character, which sets forth his calling to be a player, is his love for scenic effects, the inclination which he shows at all times to imagine himself upon the stage, till at last he tricks himself up in the oddest ways, and is certainly well fitted to play with telling effect the part of first lover in a flock of guinea-pigs, as it is described to us by the poet with the most charm-

ing humor. In the same direction points the mechanical turn which he showed as a boy.

While other young men looked upon the world as a theatre, for him the theatre is the world, and all else is simply material for it. The representation is the chief thing, and in this he shows himself the born player. As much understanding as he shows for the appearance of things, and for their artistic side, as little has he for their reality. The complaint which Aurelia makes against him was well grounded, that she had never seen any one who so little understood, so wholly misunderstood, the men among whom he lived, as did he. If one heard him explain Shakespeare, he would think that he had just come from the council of the gods, and had heard them consult how they should make man. But when, on the other hand, he associated with men, he was like the first child of creation, who, with strange wonder and edifying good-nature, stares at the lions and apes, the sheep and the elephants, and addresses them as his equals. But she describes also his true artistic nature, when she admires in him the penetrating and correct eye with which he judges poetry, and especially dramatic poetry; without ever having seen the subjects in nature, he recognizes what is true in the representation. There seems to lie in him a presentiment of the whole world, which, through the harmonious contact of poesy, is aroused and developed. He defends himself by saying that, from his childhood up, he was more accustomed to look within than without, and that

it was very natural that he should have learned to know human nature to a certain degree, without being at all able to understand and to comprehend men. If Wilhelm Meister is not the portrait of a true artistic genius in whom the intuitive faculty is predominant, it will be impossible to find one. Goethe describes in Serlo a realistic nature, the counterpart to Wilhelm's subjective, idealizing turn of mind; but these oppositions in natures will continue so long as art remains. The one has a special perception of the beautiful, the other of that which is peculiar. If the man often annoys us through his weakness, the artist in him attracts us again; and we lament so much the more that Goethe, untrue to his first intention, makes him abandon the realm of art, in order to take up the lancet of the surgeon. A glance behind the curtain repels all who are not born for the stage, and especially the young man; but Wilhelm was in this way first attracted, for with him the thing itself is less important than the symbol. We are not, therefore, surprised that the artist represents him to us lost in meditation upon the slipper, with which the mischievous Philene was able one night to destroy his rest.





MARIANNE.

(*Wilhelm Meister.*)

"What a miserable creature is a woman who with desire does not at the same time inspire love and honor!" The necessary fate of one thus unfortunate, Goethe describes to us in his Marianne, with that graphic truth of which he was so great a master whenever he drew from the treasury of his personal experiences and of his own observation; and it is from these that he has drawn the character of the maiden whom he gave to Wilhelm as his first love. She is a person of weak character, pretty and frivolous, like thousands before her. Without moral depth, she felt not the degradation of her condition, until she learned to know Wilhelm:

"Thoughtlessness came to her as a friend, while she lived in a state of mental confusion, and was either deluded as to her condition or did not comprehend it. The circumstances to which she found herself exposed appeared but isolated; pleasure and pain perpetually effaced each other's impress; humiliation was compensated by vanity, and want often by momentary superfluity; she could adduce necessity and custom in her defence and justification, and thus from hour to hour she banished every corroding reflection."

But how, then, could Wilhelm deceive himself respecting her, if she was of such a character? Ah! one's first love needs to have but little; here the poet says himself so truly:

"Happy years of youth, happy time of first and earliest love! man is then like a boy, who for hours can be delighted with an echo—who can sustain unaided the whole burden of conversation, and is abundantly satisfied if the unseen spirit with whom he converses repeats but the final sounds of the words which he has uttered."

Such was Wilhelm's condition in the earlier, and more especially in the later period of his love for Marianne; he had endowed her with the whole wealth of his own emotions, and considered himself as a very pauper, who subsisted on her charity; and, as a landscape derives its greatest, or indeed its entire charm from the brilliancy of the sunshine, so in his was every thing beautiful and embellished by the relation which it bore to her. But the sun which one feels in his own bosom, and which gilds the poverty of reality with a stream of light and splendor—this is love!

The career of Marianne, as it unfolds itself before us, would be alone the most striking confutation of the charge of immorality which has been so often brought against the "Wilhelm Meister." The destruction of the poor maiden is brought about in a way which expresses in itself the deepest feeling of morality and of necessity. It is as moral as Nature herself, for we find nothing arbitrary in it.

What undeserved misfortune had it been for Wilhelm, if she had been preserved in life! How had he deserved this stigma, by being fettered forever to one so unworthy? Would not this punishment have been too severe for his innocence? But misfortune is the purifying flood which, in union with her true and sacrificing love, cleansed—yea, ennobled and delivered Marianne. She who in the beginning arouses our aversion, at last becomes worthy of our sympathy and favor. We forgive her the guilt for which she has so grievously suffered. The poet has already, in "God and the Bayadere," brilliantly described the way in which a lost creature is delivered from guilt, and purified through the power of love. Here, once more in Marianne, is this way described at great length, with all the spiritual wealth of poesy, from that moment where he shows to us her inner being:

"When she looked within herself all was void, and her heart found no support or refuge. The more wretched she was, the more closely did she cling to her beloved. Her passion increased the more as the dread of losing him every day grew stronger"—

even to those last letters to him, when the frightful feeling of being forsaken by him who was her only deliverer, and had raised her up out of her degraded condition, brings from her that heart-rending cry:

"None of my letters have as yet been able to reach you; my prayers and my entreaties have been in vain. Will you yourself give these cruel orders? . . .

"Oh dear, dear, kind Wilhelm! be still kind, as you were wont to be. Come, and leave me not to perish in my misery! . . .

"You deem me guilty, and I am so—but not to the extent you think. . . .

"Not for my sake merely, but for your own, I implore of you to come to me! . . .

"I call to you by every thing that is sacred—by all that can touch a human heart! . . .

"You will not hear me? Then I must at length be silent; but these letters shall not perish. Perhaps they may speak to you even when the shroud has enveloped my lips, and the voice of your repentance can no longer reach my ear. . . ."

Marianne loves in Wilhelm her better self; in him she loves all that is beautiful and noble, for all this has he awaked in her. She can no more go back into her former condition, after her degradation has become manifest to her; she must perish, after she has lost the hand which had lifted itself out of the dark stream of life for her deliverance.

The artist has shown her to us in that so charmingly described scene when she, sitting by Wilhelm upon the sofa, listens to his narrative of the puppet-show; and, since he dwelt on it in great detail, makes every possible effort to conceal the sleepiness which overtakes her. Since the poet has not given us a particular description of her, the artist was obliged to figure her after those characteristics which we see developed in her. She had rather a sensitive, dreamy nature, than one spiritually active. Her eyes were great, dark, a little vacant, but brilliant; a brow, not commanding; a good-natured, laughing mouth, with beautiful teeth; a rounded chin,

and a full bust, attracting by its beauty those whom she could not retain by her intellect and character. In the bright throng of women with whom Wilhelm was a favorite, she is plainly the least gifted; yet is there something so deeply true and genuinely poetical in the strength with which she holds fast with unshaken steadiness the one great, noble, and powerful emotion of her life, in spite of the bitterest need and the most urgent temptation, that we cannot deny to her fate our heart-sympathy.


Pecht



PHILINE.

(*Wilhelm Meister.*)

The fact cannot, unfortunately, be denied, that sometimes a slight variance exists between the inclinations of the world and the demands of the strict moralist. To the latter class belongs the whole most charming half of the human race, as soon as it comes to sit in judgment on our heroine. And it is one of the rare cases where the views of the two classes are not to be reconciled. For men show in a lamentable way an incomprehensible weakness for the fair transgressor.

Let us hearken to the accusations which are brought forward by the little knot of moral critics—we had almost said of "Philistines"—and by the great host of her beautiful accusers, and then see what can be urged in excuse for the frail one.

Philine, it is said, is in every respect an immoral person; false, malicious, bold, and impertinent in the highest degree; she tells fibs, pilfers, coquets, puts her slippers under other people's beds to destroy their

peace of mind, kisses men in the open street instead of in private, is hypocritical, flattering, untruthful, shameless; in fact, she is a very low person. Her presence is an affront to every honest woman. If she had only earnestly repented, like the notorious countess who entered into a cloister when she ceased to be handsome, and ended her immoralities by writing moral romances, this would be well enough. But, pah! to become a tailoress, how vulgar is this! It is not to be excused, we confess it. In other respects, the poor one lives yet; and indeed, perhaps more than any other character which the poet has created, she has a truly immortal life. She will survive us all. All the critical pens of Europe cannot destroy her; all the writing-ink and printing-ink of the two hemispheres does not suffice to drown her, or even to blacken her. All the organs and church-bells, from Königsberg to Basel, cannot drown her joyous laugh. It is, indeed, said in the Scriptures, "Woe to him through whom offences come!" How much offence has she given to all pure souls, in white and blue stockings!

On the other hand, she has charmed so many people, that here again the scales hang even. Perhaps also she atones for her glaring faults by some native virtues, for scarcely can they be called acquired. First of all, she is full of spirit; she walks through all the paths of life as a mistress; what would offend in others, charms in her. Her character shows not the slightest

trace of sentimentality; all is pure sunshine, not moonshine, although we hear her say:

"Sing no more in strains of sadness
Of the loneliness of night;
Darksome hours were made for gladness,
Secret joy and love's delight."

Happily, she does not accompany herself on the harpsichord, for she knows not how to play. Then she is unselfish, notwithstanding the cunning preservation of her trunk from the thieves; is generous with her own and others' money; moreover, she is compassionate; she alone remains with Wilhelm when he lies wounded. She is frank and truth-loving in a high degree, at least when it is convenient. Her genius is a plentiful store of sound common-sense. Although cold and polite, cunning and sly, she is nevertheless fresh, bright, and joyous to such degree that she seems to all the world like a smiling morn. What some call hypocrisy, perfidy, untruthfulness, malice, is, in her, sharp wit, quickness, trickery, waggery.

It is true that she was not born to be a vestal, and, since she is not, she does not pretend to be one. It suits her better to be a goddess of pleasure and mirth. She has the grace of a kitten, and makes pleasant sport of things most earnest; she is wholly the woman. Would you see her in marble, go into the Tribune of Florence and look on the Medicean Venus—here is her portrait. In old times she was called Phryne, lived in Athens,

talked with Alcibiades, and was on very good terms with the Socratic school. With the revival of poetry in the eighteenth century, Goethe brought her into Germany. The white marble had changed itself into powder, the flowing robes of stone into the hoop-petticoat; but she remained the goddess of pleasure, of joyous sport. Imperishable attraction still surrounds that fine, graceful, elastic, active form; gives brilliance to all that she says and does; takes captive all who approach her, and disarms even the sternest judges with the sweetness of her smiles. She is condemned only when she is not present.

There are two modes of elevating men through the labors of art: the first exalts the soul, and gives it enlargement and liberty, by inspiring us with its loftiness and earnestness; but the second effects this liberation of the soul through its alliance with the graces. To this alliance, Goethe's Philine is never untrue, little as she is true to other engagements, and therefore must she be acquitted, for grace and beauty are also virtues, and the most efficient; they take us captive, but only to set us free, with quick and emancipated souls, yet ever longing after them. If we have attempted to justify this lovely creation of the poet, according to our ability, we must freely confess that the task of the painter is incomparably more difficult. It is scarcely possible for art to do her justice, because Goethe has made her perfect in every minute detail.

We meet her in the excursion which she arranged with Wilhelm and Laertes to the mill; sitting down upon the grass, she weaves garlands, and to each of her friends has given a kiss, asking, "Which tastes the best?" From the poet we have simply learned that she had rich, blond hair; a little, graceful, erect figure, with lovely hands and feet. These blue eyes had something flashing, like the gleam of jewels, and something sharp and waggish; for no one had better knowledge of men than the little rogue. Gentle and graceful in her movements, her merry pranks, the absence of all shyness, her restless, unstable character,—all contribute to give the bold gypsy the power of strongly fascinating all who approach her.



THE COUNTESS.

(*Wilhelm Meister.*)

When the times are degenerate and wicked, and the public life of a nation shares the infection, poetry devotes itself, with peculiar relish, to the female character. That, at the time of the writing of "Wilhelm Meister," there was a general corruption of morals in Germany, is certainly one of the chief reasons that this romance was devoted to the glorifying of women; for the deeds of the German men, at that period, added little to the national glory, as we may see very plainly from the narrative of Aurelia, and still more from the history of those years. On the contrary, no book in the world is so rich in varied and finely-marked female characters, which, lovely and beautiful as they almost all are, are by no means similar in their qualities, even where the outward conditions of their lives are the same. Where is it possible to find five women who, all educated for the stage, are nevertheless so greatly unlike as the sensuous, light-minded, good-natured Marianne, the sentimental Melina, the ardent,

pensive figure of Mignon, the talented artist Aurelia, the gifted maiden Philine? How nicely is the distinction marked of the gifts of the two latter, and how admirable are also the other women who are brought before us: the transparent, friendly Natalie; the cunning, intriguing, coquettish baroness; the active, sober, domestic, and yet intellectual Therese! and, before all, in how masterly a manner is the countess delineated with a few strokes! What a perfume of aristocracy is there in all that she says and does! We seem everywhere to hear the rustling of her silk robes, the light tread of her feet upon the parquet, and to breathe in that indescribable atmosphere which surrounds high-born ladies.

As the whole episode of the visit of the theatrical party to the castle is perhaps the most masterly part of the book — of incomparable truthfulness and unfailing humor, which is so much more effective as the author never loses his calmness and dignity, never seems to make faces even when he narrates the drollest things—so it is especially the figure of the count which is irresistibly comic.

The consciousness of his superiority is everywhere so apparent that we are not sorry at the momentary pain which the young man inflicts upon him, the personal amiability and modesty of Wilhelm contrasting very favorably with the pomposity of the count.

It is a peculiarity of women, that, with all their devotion and unlimited capacity of self-sacrifice, they desire

nothing so much as worship and idolatry; almost all would rather be deified than merely honored; they would fascinate rather than please. It is on this account that they are more easily led astray by exaggerated professions of adoration than by simple love, and there is no surer means of obtaining their favor than by humbly bowing at their feet. It was in this way that Wilhelm won the favor of our beautiful countess. As, at his first appearance, blinded by the sight of her charms, he was thrown into confusion, so ever after he approached her with the greatest respect and honor.

Perhaps Wilhelm would not have been thus confused had it not been for the splendor of her dress, her jewels and flowers, the lackeys and the antechamber, the footmen and splendid carriage, and such a majestic pedant as her husband; for, at a certain age, the nerves of young, handsome, and idle men are easily excited by odors, gloves, perfumes, and gossamer. The manner in which the pure, conscientious, even scrupulous countess is led, nevertheless, to a confession of her inclination—while she has not only that sense of duty which is common to all females, but also a still greater hinderance in an excessive consciousness of her rank—is delineated with extraordinary skill, and especially the manner in which this consciousness manifests itself. How charmingly does the poet represent her as lamenting, at her first appearance, that the players, unhappily, are only Germans! A French harlequin is in better repute with her than a German Frederick

Louis Schröder, at least for the time, until she learns to know both better.

It is evident that she is very good-hearted, but she has an aristocratic way of manifesting it, and especially by giving presents. As soon as she begins to take pleasure in Wilhelm, she takes the first opportunity to give rich gifts to Philine. How gracefully does she make amends to Wilhelm as a man, for the inattention which she had shown to the poet! How finely described is also the way in which the baroness, for her amusement, will bring about a little intrigue between the two, and use the same for her own advantage! In all this there is such a naturalness that one might almost take oath that Goethe describes here directly from memory. How the distinction of rank, which should be a great barrier, nevertheless, among cultivated people, has only a fictitious existence, and may even become a means of temptation, is here charmingly told:

"Merely to behold each other afforded them unutterable delight—a feeling to which they yielded up their guileless souls, without encouraging a bolder wish, or reflecting upon any ulterior consequence.

"As across the river which divides them, two hostile outposts will converse together pleasantly and happily, without reflecting upon the war in which their countries are engaged, so, across the wide chasm of birth and station, did the countess exchange expressive looks with Wilhelm, and both believed that they might innocently indulge such emotions."

Nothing is more dangerous, in such relations, than the meeting of two pure, inexperienced hearts; a woman is

in this case too much inclined to dispense with this or that formality, feeling too confident that a man will not abuse his liberty, and thus she meets him, as a rule, more than half-way.

In this manner it comes at last to such result as is described in the scene of the departure :

"When he looked at the countess, it seemed as if electric flames were sparkling before his eyes. Suddenly he became breathless, and was forced to discontinue his reading."

This is the moment—when the countess, in order to conceal her confusion, gives Wilhelm the ring—in which the artist represents her, since here her real character most truly appears; for, if men love one less upon whom they have conferred favors, on the contrary, women love such a one more. The gift binds them instead of the receiver, and her gift to Wilhelm is followed by her truest devotion.





THE HARPER.

(*Wilhelm Meister.*)

Neither artists, women, nor common people, like abstractions; they must transform them to figures, to persons, before they can become interested in them. It is the artists who undertake this work of transformation, who give to ideas their living embodiment. They do this not of design, but by nature; they do not manufacture their figures; they do not compound them, as in a retort, but they are the children of inspiration. Goethe did not set himself on a beautiful day to invent Mignon, but she arose living before his spirit, the product and exponent of that longing which he felt for the sunny lands of the South. In him, indeed, it was but one longing among many; but in Mignon it was her whole being—she was consumed by it as by fire.

All the characters that figure in his writings do by no means arise at once, complete and fully developed, in the mind of the poet. The Harper is indeed an inspiration, not a fabrication; but the wild figure of

the bard takes its final shape only by degrees, and develops itself gradually in the book. In this respect he is unlike Mignon, who comes before us a perfect creation. Goethe does not seem to have originally thought of that background of frenzy, and the frightful history of the relation between the Harper and Mignon; these were brought out as the story went on.

Goethe makes the Harper appear with an imposing figure:

"His bald crown was encircled by a few gray hairs, and great blue eyes looked forth mildly under long, white eyebrows. He had a flowing white beard, which did not conceal his smiling lips, and a well-formed nose; an ample dark-brown robe enveloped his slender body from head to foot."

He enlivens society, and elevates its tone. He sings:

"—— As the young bird sings,
That carols in the tree;
The rapture of the music brings
Its own reward to me."

Still, there is nothing that savors at all of melancholy any more than when he accompanies upon his instrument Philine in her cheerful songs. This first appears when Wilhelm surprises him in his chamber with the sweet song:

"Whose bread hath ne'er been steeped in tears."

Then he says:

"To fate the wretched owe their birth,
And all the guilt they feel within;
Avenged and punished on this earth
By deep remorse, that follows sin."

Here arises, for the first time, the thought of guilt to be repented of, and pain to be endured:

"The man who pines for solitude,
His wish may soon obtain;
For friends will pass in various mood,
And leave him to his pain."

In the castle, he speaks to Wilhelm of a fearful secret, and that he brings misfortune with him; he is guilty, but more unhappy than guilty. Thus appear the earliest signs of that frenzy which, at the conflagration, burst forth in full power. The whole history of his mental cure, and of the relapse which brings on his tragic end, is described with extraordinary psychological skill, as the earlier history of the unfortunate man is, with wonderful poetic power. It does not, nevertheless, wholly correspond to the impression which he makes upon us when we first meet him. One is inclined to ask, how so great a change as that of a young, ardent man into a man seemingly aged, with white hair, could so rapidly have taken place, and can but doubt whether such a transformation was intended at the first conception of the romance.

But be this as it may, the figure of the unfortunate one, and the supernatural feature in his destiny, are of striking poetic effect. He has genuine vitality and force, which is more than we can say of most of the male figures of the book, especially of the second part, excepting only the fair Frederick and Serlo. Of the

characters of this second part, Lothario, Jarno, the Abbé, the artist has taken no notice, because this half of the book, written after the Italian journey, is far inferior to the first. A further ground of this omission is, that these men have no national physiognomy. As every one must have a father, so must every one have a native land; a soil from which he springs, and whose impress he bears. In this respect, these figures make a strange impression; for, with incomprehensible care on the part of the poet, they have been divested of all national peculiarities. While, in the first part of the book, we find ourselves everywhere upon German soil, later the history loses itself in a land wholly unknown. One cannot tell more whether it is summer or winter, cold or warm; there arises a cosmopolitism, which has something wholly unartistic in its absence of all that is distinctive. This is only to be explained from the deep disgust which Goethe felt at the political condition of his fatherland, a condition at that time certainly very pitiable. Of this feeling is "Wilhelm Meister" a remarkable memorial, and one has deep sympathy with the poet who must compose under so unfavorable circumstances. The Germans have the fault, in their examination of works of art, always to seek after the thought, the idea, the purpose, which guided the artist in their production, and rack their brains to find out its meaning, rather than quietly to enjoy them. To criticism of this kind, no work, except "Faust," has been more exposed than "Wilhelm Meis-

ter," and it must be confessed that the poet, in the continuation of his work, has given but too much occasion for this, since he then began, influenced by the causes above stated, to yield himself to that symbolizing tendency, and to resolve his figures into mere allegorical phantoms. In the first half of the book, there is no trace of this. Goethe said to Eckermann, very truly, of it: "One seeks a centre, and this is difficult and not appropriate. I should suppose that a rich, variegated life, that unfolds itself before our eyes, would have some value in itself, without any declared tendency, which the conceptive faculty alone can comprehend." Would that the last books of this work had been written in that free, spontaneous spirit, instead of being full, as we now find them, of allegorical figures and mysteries, that dissipate all interest, and warp the character of the hero! All this is because of a false artistic theory, which turns itself with disgust from reality, and is a remarkable proof that the theorizing, even of such a wonderful creative genius as Goethe, not only does not help, but almost always works mischief. It checks the flow of genius, which needs to follow nothing else but its own inner law.



Ad. Neumann sculp.

Wagner.

MIGNON.

(*Wilhelm Meister.*)

In whose soul has there not been at some time that strong longing, that inexplicable homesickness, which appears among all northern peoples, in the desire to visit southern and sunny lands? It may be because their light and warmth as much attract us as cold and darkness repel us; but, in any event, there is this longing for a land, for an existence, where every-day life is not commonplace and monotonous, and its rude strife gives place to repose; where the murky sky is changed to a sunny brightness, and quiet, peace, and beauty, rule; where the heart may revel in responsive love, and the outbreaks of passion give way to ardent impulses of bliss. The Greeks placed this land far back in the golden age; mediæval Christianity called it Heaven; modern romanticism calls it Italy, and in this comes nearer the truth, for this northern longing is not really for Heaven, but for a beautified earth. It has its origin in youth, in the glowing desire to realize its hopes, not in the self-renunciation and weariness of age;

it does not wholly reject wine, song, and kisses, but with these will have more of grace and attraction, more of the charm of beauty and sweet enticement.

Goethe detected this longing in the rich and luxurious Frankfort, on the blooming banks of the Rhine; in the scanty and anxious frugality of the Thuringian highlands, shut out from all the beauty of art, it amounted almost to a passion, as he himself narrates. The artistic expression of this feeling is Mignon—this mystic, dream-like, mysterious character, undefined in its outlines, seemingly without a purpose, and yet of such enchanting effect. She is the embodiment of that longing, that homesickness for the South, which all feel who have never been there. And he who has been there feels, also, a powerful impulse to return; but this is of another kind, and is finely expressed in Goethe's "Roman Elegies." These two feelings stand related to each other, like the first sensation of love, with its vagueness, its undefined hope, its sweet impulse, and the longing after a distant joy which we once had in full possession, and without which we have a continual feeling of unrest.

Mignon—without the songs which Goethe puts into her mouth, and by means of which he adds to that description of theatrical life which takes the front place in his romance, such a splendid, mystic, and wonderfully stimulating perspective—appears as a genuine little wild Italian in a strange land, nothing more nor less.

She is however depicted with such truth that she

often repels us, just as most plants of the South show their shining but hard and prickly leaves. The songs are the flowers, with their strange, glowing pomp of colors. A fit subject for poetry, through her natural endowments, she herself is unconscious of this; but, on the contrary, is, in her undeveloped, harsh, stiff, timid, yet passionate character, a problem to herself and to others—a problem which people like Jarno always mistake, and do not find worth the labor of solution. Indeed, in this love for boy's attire and the like, would lie something offensive, if the poet did not again set it aside through the earnestness and depth of her nature, and through a power of passion, in which she differs from all other personages of the romance, and by means of which she uplifts the whole frivolous, theatrical life to a higher and tragic sphere.

Through this innate strength, in union with imagination; through the sad longing after her unknown home, and the wonderful force with which she expresses the same in her song, the poet gives her an extraordinary attraction, and surrounds her with an atmosphere irresistibly enchanting. Who does not feel the undefinable magic of that glorious land, when she sings:

> "Know'st thou the house, its roofs on pillars tall?
> Glitters each room, and gleams the stately hall;
> Still marble forms look down on me so mild,
> And say, 'What have they done to thee, poor child?'"

Who does not transport himself in thought to one of those noble but fearful roads, which lead down from the

heights of the Alps to the Italian plains, when she continues :

"Knowst thou the mount? its pathway to the clouds,
Where slow the mule his weary journey plods?
In dark caves lurk the serpent's ancient brood;
Down rolls the rock, and over it the flood."

Does not fancy bear us to the descent of the Splugen Pass, where the thunder of the waterfall of Pianazzo, by the side of the way, mingles with the bells of the mules, and from out whose depth breathes up a soft balsamic air?

Still more strongly does this homesickness express itself, united with the growing passion, and the feeling of entire isolation and estrangement with its oppressive burden, its deadly pain, in the song :

"He only who has loved,
Knows grief like mine;
From hope and joy removed,
Alone I pine.
Around, with longing eyes,
I look all day;
While he whose heart I prize
Is far away.
From every joy removed,
I faint—I pine—
He only who has loved,
Knows grief like mine."

In these few words lie a power, a naturalness, a sob of sorrow, which give them a place among the most beautiful productions of lyric art.

In the position in which this fascinating creature is placed, with such unlimited capacity of devotion, with such a deep, earnest, passionate character, and finding in the whole wide world no soul that can even partially reciprocate her feelings, since even Wilhelm has nothing but friendly compassion for her, and, through his union with Natalie, she had lost all hope of winning him; in this homesickness, and inability to understand strangers, and to be understood by them, whereby, with all her ardent emotion, she remains shut up as in a prison—in all this there is something so deeply tragic, so affecting, that one almost finds it a relief when the repressed fervor of her soul consumes its covering, and finds vent in those sorrowful words which she utters when Natalie says to her that her heart is beating violently, "Let it break, it has already throbbed too long!" It is a relief to hear her in the heavenly song in whose execution the artist brings her before us:

"Thus let me seem—till thus I be—
These snow-white garments ne'er deny.
From this bright world I soon shall flee
To an enduring home on high.

"A little while I there shall rest,
With vision pure and open mind;
In robes of white no longer drest,
My wreath and garland left behind."

Goethe felt that the question, What crime hath this creature committed, that she should suffer so severely?

was a right one, and attempted to answer it by a reference to Providence, and by the history of her parentage, which, however, was evidently afterward devised for this end. That he interwove this mysterious figure in his narrative increases its artistic value, the more that we frequently meet in Nature such unsolved problems—problems which seem to impeach Eternal Justice.



HERMANN.

(*Hermann and Dorothea.*)

THERE is scarcely, in our literature, another poem which so truly mirrors the deepest life and feeling of the German people as this fine epic, which shows the sudden meeting of two congenial hearts, and their mutual love. In this poem, Goethe reaches his highest success; it is the perfection of artistic work. Simple in its plot and incidents, it is yet so idealized that, without doing any violence to Nature, we are lifted up, upon the waves of its glorious verse, far above all that is trivial or commonplace, and have a feeling of elevation, of calm, of harmony, of full satisfaction, such as possesses our souls when we look upon the antique images of the gods in their marble repose, but which modern art rarely gives.

Over its pages blows a cheerful breath of country air; a Sunday-like feeling steals over us. How thoroughly German are all the characters in every feature, their want of wit, their simplicity, their honesty, their straight-

forwardness, and, with these, their thoughtfulness, their humor, their little scruples and peculiarities, and unpolished freedoms! All these we see, and yet there is no exaggeration or caricature, and the whole description shines with an almost indescribable brilliancy. What is disagreeable in their peculiarities is more than counterbalanced by the sense of good-will and right feeling, which harmonizes what is discordant, and removes all feeling of contradiction. Never was thine image, O German people, more truly and charmingly painted!

Hermann himself—who does not smile at him?—the good youth, in his awkwardness, his heaviness, his respect before all authority, and especially that of his father, who, of more impulsive character, chides him continually because of this peculiarity:

> "But 'tis my grief, the youth, at home so busy and active,
> When he ventures abroad, is still seen timid and aimless.
> Little of joy finds he to go where company waits him;
> Even the maidens' groups seeks not, but shuns and avoids them,
> And the festive dance, so fondly loved by the youthful."

Who loves him not?—so bashful, so earnest, so right-minded, when a mighty passion, like the lightning, seizes him, and so transfigures him, that the parson says:

> "Truly you come as an altered man, for ne'er have I seen you
> Bearing before so bright a glance, so lively an aspect."

How does a new feeling flow over him, like a rushing

stream, and his dreamy character grow active and resolute! It becomes apparent that it was by no means stupidity that made him seek retirement; that his nature possessed both earnestness and depth; and that he was well able to express his feelings, as his neighbor, the apothecary, learned in his reply to his praise of the unmarried state:

> "Is he a man right-hearted, he who, in good and in evil,
> Thinks of himself alone, and who, in his joy and his sorrow,
> Seeks no sharer, and feels no need of such in his bosom?"

We see also, from his demeanor at his first interview with Dorothea, that he could think quickly and act promptly. That in the silent dreamer slumbered a nature that was wanting neither in mind, nor courage, nor energy, and which needed only to be aroused, is apparent from the thoughtful words spoken by him at his betrothal:

> "All the faster bound, amid this loosing of all things,
> Be, Dorothea, the tie! We firm will hold to each other,
> Firm and long; nor quit our hold of the good that is given us.
> For the man who, in wavering times, has a wavering mind too,
> He adds weight to the ill, and spreads it wider and wider;
> But he who firmly stands, he moulds the world to his posture—
> Thou art mine, and mine now is mine more truly than ever,
> Not in fear to be held, in stealth to be poorly enjoyed,
> But with courage and heart. And if the foeman assail us
> Now, or in future days, I don my harness and go forth."

When we consider the earnest, laconic, austere, intro-

spective personality, and also the firm, rounded nature, the susceptibility for all that is high and ideal, which is active in him, but which he, until now, in his daily life, could not rightly estimate, and therefore shamefacedly concealed, we are able to understand whence comes his shy, embarrassed manner. It is in the form, not in the substance, that he is deficient, and it is this very circumstance that gives him such a peculiar charm, and makes him so truly a type of our German youth. But more than all, he is such a type, through his dislike toward all that is vulgar; through his disinterestedness, which is clearly manifest; through his noble self-respect, that is never ashamed of his calling, but proud of it, and which will not endure the slightest imputation or insult upon himself or his friends; through his just judgment of persons outwardly above himself, and in general his appreciation of human relations.

If we gather together all his expressions, we find that it is he, before all the other personages of the poem, who gives utterance to the most beautiful and deepest thoughts, but only when he is under excitement. He is not inclined to deal with general principles, and does so only in a half-apologetic way when a special incident gives occasion, as there where he speaks of love:

"For all ties by love, too well I feel it, are loosened
When he twines us round; and not the maiden alone leaves
Father and mother behind when she to the man of her choice goes—

Even the youth, too, knows no more of father and mother
When the maid that alone he can love is gone and forever."

Hermann's passion is healthful, as are all his feelings; the form of his beloved attracts him as well as her conduct; nevertheless, he says:

"Should I but for the last time see her, yet will I once more
That dark eye behold, its look of openness meeting;
Though I may press them never, yet will I the head and the shoulders
Once more see, which my arm would so gladly fold in embraces;
Yet the mouth will I see, from which a kiss and a 'yes' would
Make me happy forever; a 'no' give endless affliction."

But although he confesses this so openly, the perception which he has of the worth of her character is dominant in him. He knows how with firmness of will to tame the senses:

"E'en as a statue of stone, fast bound in the depth of his feeling,
Nor did he closer press her, but stiffened bore up the burden.
And so felt he the much-loved form, the warmth of her bosom,
And the balm of her breath, which floated close to his own lips."

To the soundness of mind of Hermann and Dorothea is given also soundness of body, as a necessary concomitant:

"But then opened the door, and the goodly couple appeared,
And the friends were struck, the affectionate parents were startled
At the form of the bride, fit match for the form of the bridegroom;
Yea, too small the doorway seemed the towering stature
Of the pair to admit, who trod the threshold together."

It is this personal strength and beauty which the artist has depicted to us in that charming scene at the well, where they behold themselves reflected in the watery mirror, and each rejoices innocently in the beauty of the other.





DOROTHEA.

(*Hermann and Dorothea.*)

The charm of women is very little dependent upon social position and culture, but it is quite otherwise with men, since it is what a man thinks, says, does, creates, strives for, that awakens an interest in him. For clodhoppers and cobblers we care much less than for rulers, warriors, and inventors. In order to attract, men need to have lofty station, or to be famous. With a woman, it is almost indifferent whether she is a wearer of lace, or a bearer of water; the girdle of Venus is as often possessed by the servant-maid as by the courtly dame whom she serves. The chief occupations remain among all classes of females nearly the same; if a woman wins a higher interest by her deeds, it is usually by encroaching upon man's territory, by becoming a ruler, a warrior, or an artist, and this path by no means leads surely to the goal.

Dorothea first appears in that part which most becomes women, that of a helper. We learn to know

her as active and resolute, when, with ready thoughtfulness, she appeals to Hermann for aid for those intrusted to her care. In her noble conduct she reveals the highest gift Nature can give a woman, that of beauty, and which immediately takes Hermann captive:

"Well, I at last the maiden have found, out of so many hundreds,
By the description known.
These be certain tokens, and thereto answer the rest all:
For her belt of red sets off, round-swelling, her bosom,
Tightly drawn; well laced to her shape her black bodice close fits;
And from within its rim, all spotless, rises in small plaits
Under her fair, round chin, the linen's gauzy texture;
Frank and bright looks forth the oval head from its border,
And large tresses manifold twine the bodkin of silver;
Her, though sitting, we see, her tall form we can measure.—
Then the pastor, scanning the maid with his look as she sat there:
'Truly I wonder not that the youth was smit with the maiden,
For full well she the scrutiny bears of the man who has much seen.'"

Amiability, cheerfulness, neatness, and health, are not without reason here so strongly emphasized, for they are the most precious attendants of beauty. We learn, moreover, along with these gifts of the noble maiden, to recognize another which men also may possess, and which, in union with the others, lends her a rare charm, viz., her heroic courage and determination in defence of her virgin honor:

"But from the side of one forthwith she snatched the sabre,
Smote him with strong arm down; in his blood he down at her feet fell.
Then, with vigorous strokes, she, daring, rescued the damsels,

Smote yet four of the ruffian band; they fled for their lives forth,
Then she barred the close, and armed waited for succor."

If these advantages more than suffice to make Dorothea a remarkable personage, she has still others: she is good-hearted and helpful—she is also strong and composed under sorrows which cut deeper, and are harder to fend off, than fierce brutality:

"Then too, with calm emotion, she bore the pain that she deep felt
At her bridegroom's death; a noble youth, who, incited
By the first glow of his ardent mind, to combat for freedom,
Went on his way toward Paris, and soon a violent death found."

It is a fine feature of the poem, that Goethe invests this beautiful figure with the pensive charm of sorrow; that she had once loved, that she had tasted misfortune in all its bitterness, but which only deepens and ennobles a nature like hers,—all this is well calculated to make a deeper impression upon an unsophisticated soul like Hermann's, who early divined what her past had been:

"Think ye, such as she is, with such a form and demeanor,
She to woman has grown, nor drawn the eyes of a suitor?
Think ye that, till this time, her heart to love has been closed?"

Feeling this, he hides from her his whole heart:

"Yet to speak to her as a lover
Was not now in his power. No love was seen in her glances,
But a clear, calm sense, which called for sensible converse,
And he mastered his soul."

He first learns her friendliness, her modesty, her sound

and sensible character, which does not indeed conceal from her the consciousness of her worth; on the contrary, it is a proud humility, which admirably becomes her. The frankness with which she accepts his offer to enter into his father's service delights us, and still more the delicacy with which she dissolves the old relations:

"Yea, with you will I go, as soon as I back to my friends these
Vessels have taken, and begged of them, good people, a blessing.
Come, ye too must see them, and at their hands receive me."

For all this might have sufficed a happy and amiable disposition, and the ready tact which Nature gives; but Dorothea shows not only right feeling in what she does, but intellect in what she says, even if she speaks only respecting service:

"Woman should learn betimes to serve, for that is her office;
'Tis by obeying alone she comes to rule, and attains to
Merited sway and gentle command which is hers in the household.
Well for her, when she is so wont that no way is too rugged,
That the hours of the night to her as the hours of the day are,
That the work never seems too nice, too cunning the needle,
That she forgets herself, and lives in those who are near her."

And when she inquires after her new master, and expresses herself with amiable sweetness:

"With your parents make me acquainted,
Whom, true-hearted to serve, henceforth my innermost wish is."

Up to this point, Dorothea has been a sun without

spot, almost too excellent, not only for our good Hermann, but also for us spectators, who, through such high perfection, must feel ourselves a little repelled, indeed oppressed. She becomes more truly lovely in our eyes when the poet reveals that she also is sensitive, and easily wounded, as all women are, and that, acting from true natural impulses, she breaks forth at the irritating words of the father, and very fittingly speaks her mind:

"And I know that I stand before a person of culture,
Who, to the state of those he accosts, still moulds his behavior.
Yet it would seem that ye scarcely feel pity enough for a poor maid,
Who on your threshold has but just trod, and is ready to serve you,
Else ye never had sought, with bitter mocking, to show me
How remote my lot from yours and that of your son's is.
Is it then noble and right to cast such mockery on me,
As, at my entrance, wellnigh scares me back from your threshold?"

In this she shows that what her honest heart impels her ready lips can utter. And again, when the parson, through his interference, increases the misunderstanding, her feelings are so aroused that she brings out her most precious secret, her love for Hermann. In all this she is only elevated, because she is made more truly human, and emerges from the region of ideality into that of real life. The manner in which she receives the explanation of Hermann, and the noble frankness with which she confesses her early love, perfectly delight us. A little soul would have weakened the remembrance in the narration, but she confesses it in its full strength:

"Oh, forgive me, my excellent friend, that, e'en while I hold thee
Thus by the arm, I quake: to the long-time sea-tossed sailor
Seems, when landed, the solidest ground to sway with a motion."

In this noble confession is added the last trait to the glorious image of the German maiden.





EUGENIE.

(*The Natural Daughter.*)

Goethe himself somewhere calls the tendency to theorize the sign that the power of producing is either wanting or is not exercised. The works of both our greatest poets are remarkable illustrations of this truth, and especially those of Goethe himself. Whenever he has moulded his work to suit a favorite theory, he has been in a measure unsuccessful; the work does not bear the stamp of his genius. This is most apparent in that weak product of his old age, the second part of "Faust," but it is scarcely less plain also in "The Natural Daughter," which we have here to consider, but which had its origin in the years of his greatest strength, contemporaneously with "Faust," and "Hermann and Dorothea." But it belongs confessedly to that period of his life in which, worshipping with Schiller the Grecian forms of art, he imbibed the notion that every thing adventitious should be removed from a work of art, because it injured its dignity and ele-

vation. This is, in general, wholly right, only it is very difficult to distinguish in our modern material what is adventitious and what is essential. For this reason it happened that, in the application of the principle, he, in the work before us, destroyed without mercy not only that which was accidental, but also all that was individual in the characters; so that Schlegel very rightly described it as being "as smooth but also as cold as marble."

Notwithstanding this, the time and the material were happily chosen; it was the French court immediately before the outbreak of the Revolution. Is not a theme like this capable of the most effective treatment? What a powerful effect had "Werter," which described the condition of men's minds before the great overthrow, and "Hermann and Dorothea," which described its earliest influences over us! The reason why we are now displeased it is easy to show. The great strength of Goethe lay in the power of expressing with freshness and originality that which he received directly from Nature, and cast into the noblest form; in a word—in the naïve. On the contrary, in the "Natural Daughter," the dialogue stands related to that in "Faust," as hard though sweet biscuit to fresh bread. The personages are old-fashioned even to insipidity. Every trace of *naïveté* is banished from the characters; they are all now and then most disagreeably self-conscious.

As an illustration of what we have said, Eugenie is described to us as a lively, bold, even audacious maiden of a noble and lofty spirit. The way in which Goethe has conceived of her is worthy of him; but what feeling comes over us when this maiden, who had almost lost her life through the most foolhardy riding, awaking out of a deep swoon, immediately addresses the king:

"Let me—oh! let me here enjoy the happiness of the fullest resignation. When, in our active, courageous hours, we stand upright, strong, and bold, self supported, and putting our trust in ourselves alone, then we seem to own both the heaven and the earth. But yet, whatever in moments of enthusiasm makes us bend the knee, is also a sweet feeling!"

And when she begins to play the politician:

"How! Does our king esteem us too highly to confess that he has need of us? It is the highest duty of every right-minded citizen to obey the ruler, for, if he wavers, the whole commonwealth is disturbed, and, if he falls, all order falls with him."

Was there ever in real life a girl of sixteen years, who had been educated in seclusion and never been in the world, and had just escaped from imminent death, who in the faintest degree so spake and so thought? That she, perchance, might have some such obscure feeling, is not improbable, but it is not less certain that she would have expressed this feeling in a much less pretentious and more amiable manner, as this is actually done by the not less noble and much older Iphigenia.

If we confine ourselves to the just and beautiful conception, and set aside the inappropriate form, we find in Eugenie a true, princely child, lofty in her aims, magnanimous, remarkably generous, quick and acute, benevolent and ambitious, and with all this a woman to whom, amidst the great affairs of states, the fashion of a new garment is of the highest importance:

"There are many important crises in life which agitate the human heart, some of sorrow and some of joy. At such times a man often forgets his mere exterior, and appears before the multitude in careless attire; but a woman wishes to please every one by her tasteful dress, her well-chosen ornaments, and show herself worthy of admiration."

This was, certainly, an extremely charming, naïve feature, if it had been presented less arrogantly. Not less pleasing is it when she, with sad presentiment taking her departure, says:

"Bereaved fathers are to be pitied; but more, bereaved children. And I, poorest of all, who stand alone in this great, strange, wild world, must I separate myself from him, my only friend?"

Or, rejoicing in her poem, applauds herself:

"For a long time thou hast not, O anxious heart, expressed thy feelings in fitting words. How happy am I to utter them in words that shall endure for centuries!"

Had this been energetically spoken with the natural feeling of a Clare, it could not fail of its due effect. How pleasing is it, and wholly conformable to female character, that Eugenie, like all the daughters of Eve,

seeking temptation, cannot resist opening the cabinet with the jewels, in spite of her express promise! With what pleasant drollery would Goethe, ten years earlier, have described the scene, while now she responds to the governess, who calls to her "to remember the prohibition," in this wise fashion!—

"Oh, my son! that is especially dangerous which is especially ornamental. Leave to me the courage to wait, so splendidly arrayed for whatever may occur."

Finally, we see her borne with violence into the seaport, and there how resolved she is to use all means to deliver herself, without being able at first to succeed! In this necessity is she represented by the artist, as journeying and looking for help, and saying:

"The harbor, the most beautiful of kingdoms, with its stirring crowds, has become a wilderness, and I am alone."

That he should seek to give a fresh, noble, intrepid, but especially also the French impress, which, without doubt, lay in the intention of Goethe, is evident in itself. Nevertheless, her high spirit, united with a true French love to her native land, moves her at last to accept the offer of the hand of the judge:

"A sudden overthrow threatens this kingdom. — And shall I bear such anxiety away with me? Shall I withdraw myself from the common danger? Shall I allow the opportunity to escape me to show myself worthy of my high ancestry, and to make ashamed in their distress those who have unrighteously injured me? This is the soil of my fatherland, a sanctuary to me in childhood, and I now feel a mighty impulse to cleave to it. I cannot forsake it, and every bond that can bind me to it is holy."





OTTILIE.

(*Elective Affinities.*)

Without doubt the artist owes the greater part of his subjects either to direct observation, which enables him to select them from the living crowds, and to fashion them artistically to his purpose, or he owes them to the creative power of the imagination, which, laying hold of single features as it finds them in Nature, unites them into one image, and breathes into it the breath of life. A very small part of these figures, and by no means the poorest drawn, are fashioned by the heart of the artist, and represent his strongest and deepest feelings; they are images of persons who are dear to him, and who stand in close connection with his inmost feelings and with his most tender experiences.

Whatever changes skilful art may work upon these representative figures, the love of the poet clothes them with such a peculiar atmosphere of warmth, they glow with such a mysterious light, that we readily distinguish them from those which he owes simply to his artistic

talent. As the rule, they have more faults than the others, are not so truly outlined, are not so completely finished, and, nevertheless, they exercise much more power over us, are more enchanting, and stimulate far more the imaginative faculty. The magic power of passion which begat them, seems often to invest them as with robes of fire; setting at naught all rules, and mocking all criticism. Who has not felt this when he hears the queen in "Don Carlos," Maria Stuart, Thekla, or Mignon, Gretchen, or our Ottilie, speak? One believes that the voice of the poet, in his description of them, becomes tenderer—it trembles and hesitates. A painfully-sweet memory, a concealed melancholy, speaks from every feature; it is the rosy twilight of a sultry day, or the dying glow of a once-violent flame, which surrounds those beloved forms with its golden gleam. Is it not, then, this which lends to the form of Ottilie that dream-like charm which surrounds her in Goethe's narrative? If the clear, noble, pure delineation of Charlotte is the fruit of his genius, so the poet has painted Ottilie with his heart's blood; we owe her wholly to the inspiration of a spirit moved to its profoundest depths. Figures like hers are never created in the very hour of passion—it must have consumed itself to ashes; but who has ever loved, and did not look back with melancholy pleasure upon those sweet, bleeding wounds? We cannot wish that this fire of passion should again break out, but to the artistic

nature it presents the surest and most pleasing satisfaction to use its special creative power to glorify the beloved one, to exalt her to immortality upon the waves of sweet sound, or in the dazzling brilliancy of colors. This is the most glorious consummation which genius can offer in compensation to the loved one, for "what shall live in song must perish in life."

It is in this way that Minna Herzlieb, who gave her beautiful features to the image of Ottilie, has been rewarded by immortality for the passion with which she was able to inspire the poet in his fifty-eighth year, and which she returned. Scarce ever was there a more beautiful homage offered to female charms than in this masterpiece, which shows such artistic perfection that one can scarcely venture to examine it in its details. Such a shy, chaste maidenliness envelops the slender figure, that one fears to approach too near it with inquisitive glance. Ottilie loves indeed with all devotion, but she scarcely knows it, or rather she does not longer know that any thing but love toward Edward is possible. There is something somnambulistic in her, and, with breathless anxiety, we see the sweet child walking upon her dangerous way, at whose end is a precipice which she cannot escape. We feel fettered as in a dream, and look upon her as she goes on, impelled by an irresistible necessity, and yet so seemingly quiet and composed, to her tragic end. Yet her destiny would hardly so deeply affect us, were it not that here art

has succeeded to paint to us most graphically a deep, rich, and emotional nature, which, borne away by natural impulse, as by a rushing stream, must yield to it without making even the attempt to resist. The overpowering impression of the calamity to which she, who seems made for the happiness of domestic life, falls a victim, is especially thereby increased, since she is able to employ in all other matters, except those which stand in direct connection with her irresistible passion, the finest feeling and the most accurate observation. Yet it is as related to this passion, and colored by it, that she looks upon every thing, as some extracts from her diary will sufficiently show:

"Of the various memorials and tokens which bring nearer to us the distant and the separated, none is so satisfactory as a picture. To sit and talk to a beloved picture, even though it be unlike, has a charm in it like the charm which there sometimes is in quarrelling with a friend; we feel, in a strange, sweet way, that we are divided, and yet cannot separate.

"We like to look into the future, because the undetermined in it, which may be effected this or that way, we feel as if we could guide by our silent wishes in our own favor.

"We seldom find ourselves in a large party, without thinking the accident which brings so many here together should bring our friends to us as well."

How touching is the meekness, the patient devotion, united with the most unshaken trustfulness and persistence, which are expressed in the following passages!—

"People will allow their faults to be shown them, they will let themselves be punished for them, they will patiently endure many things because of them; they only become impatient when they have to lay them aside.

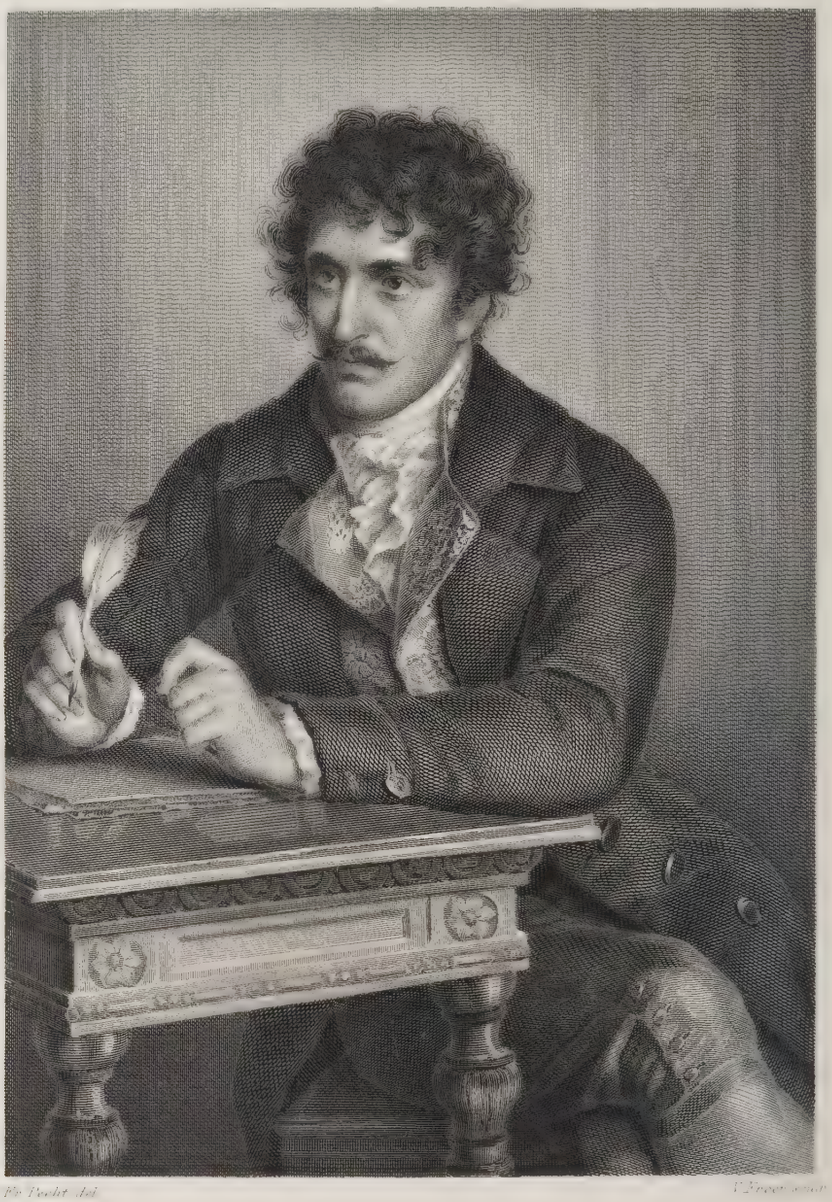
"Certain defects are necessary for the existence of individuality; we should not be pleased if old friends were to lay aside certain peculiarities.

"Violent passions are incurable diseases; the means which will cure them are what first make them thoroughly dangerous."

This entire passivity, this incapacity for action, united with such firmness of will and tenacity of purpose, are as affecting as they are characteristic of German women.

Standing quietly on the shore, one may easily call to him struggling in the whirlpool, "Stand still, yield not to the current!" The irresistible force of the element mocks as well his efforts as our counsel. Ottilie perishes with her eyes open. She does not fall, she is crushed. The loving heart, that is no longer able to unite love and duty, breaks.

The artist has represented her as walking in the neighborhood of the pond that proved so fatal to her, and sought to express in her large, half-shut eyes, the mouth slightly open, the gliding movement of the body, the flowing hair, something of that somnambulistic character, and of that strong but unconscious sensuousness, which surround this sweet creation with such an inexpressible charm that we never feel inclined to blame her, but to give to her our truest sympathy, even if we cannot deny the righteousness and moral necessity of her fate.



Ph. Perdet del. V. Pierce sculp.

Edouard

EDWARD.

(*Elective Affinities.*)

If Goethe generally treats the gentlemen very badly who take the part of lovers in his works, and not only gives them heavy crosses to bear, but makes them also perform their parts poorly, this is wholly justifiable on psychological grounds, since long experience testifies that love makes men more stupid and women brighter.

Perhaps of all these afflicted gentlemen, none comes off so badly as the hero of the "Elective Affinities," since the extraordinary power of the delineation leaves no doubt of its truth. The ground of this whole phenomenon is found here, that love-making, which with men is but a subordinate occupation, even if the most interesting, in romance and plays is made the chief work of the lover, and this affects us disagreeably. With men it is rather doing than being, with women it is rather being than doing.

But the Baron Edward occupies himself, as we see him, only in love-making; only in this has he attained to mas-

tery; in all other things is he a thorough *dilettante*, with all that disagreeable and unmanly flavor which dilettanteism gives to men. Even if it were not told us in the beginning, we should infer from his whole demeanor that he had not been sufficiently chastised by his father when a boy, and that his gracious mother had almost spoiled him. In his flute-playing, in his gardening, in his readings, everywhere, he is in danger of being ridiculous, or at least of awakening a little contempt, because he begins with such impatient haste, and is neither earnest nor persistent. How finely is the Captain contrasted with him! The Captain also loves, but he does many things of which Edward has no perception—he labors, and so neither he nor Faust, to whom love also is only a subordinate thing, is in danger of arousing in our hearts a feeling of barren pity.

Only through two features has the poet preserved Edward from being perfectly despicable, as was Weislingen: with all his childish impatience, he is thoroughly amiable, and is, in every sense, brave. He seeks war and death when misfortune overtakes him.

This is the manly side of his character—only, alas! we do not clearly see it, but merely hear of it incidentally; whereas the English poet takes good care, first of all, to make us accurately acquainted with this characteristic of his hero, so that no doubt respecting it can remain. But that our poet left it undecided what his intention was, is a highly-significant feature, not only in the portrait of

Edward, but also in his own, and that of the period in which the book had its origin. It was written, as we know, in the years 1808–'9—the period of the deepest, most hopeless depression of Germany, and it makes upon us of to-day a very peculiar impression to see a man in a distinguished social position act without any discernible grounds for his action. All the personages of the story are German, the scene is laid in Germany, but all local characteristics are effaced with the utmost care. The whole plot could as well have been laid in the moon as in Germany. Every reference to an oppressed, betrayed, dishonored nation, and to the condition of public affairs, then most lamentable, which forms the invisible background of this painting, is wanting; and nevertheless it is simply this background which gives their justification to these figures of the poet. It was with the Germans of that time as with the Jews. Without a fatherland, and without any hope of obtaining one, all activity must limit itself to the family and to the intimate relations of friendship. In such a state of affairs all the emotions of the soul become sickly, as we find them described in Werter, in Wilhelm Meister, but especially in Edward.

Transferred to the year 1813, such a character as Edward is not imaginable. He goes out to serve under a leader "where death is probable, but victory is certain." In these words Goethe could have thought only of Napoleon, and so gives to Edward the fortunate post of a soldier of the Confederation of the Rhine, but considerately

avoids giving him the glory of a defender of the fatherland. Such high patriotism must necessarily have been a counteractive to that sickness of the soul under which he labored, and have greatly contributed to his mental recovery.

Nowhere does the extraordinary artistic superiority of Goethe more plainly show itself than in his description of the restless, hasty, hot-tempered, capricious, but nevertheless amiable Baron. We ever see the man of fine education, of fine culture, who, partly through his natural endowments, and partly through external influences from childhood, has learned to do not only the right thing but the wrong also, in an attractive way. He is, through and through, a cavalier, without a single plebeian feature, while the earnest Captain, contrasted with him, shows through his soldierly bearing the born citizen. We see in him a stiff and formal character; an active mind; a nature persistent, punctilious, and taking strict account both of time and money; while Edward is naturally prodigal of both, and has never learned to know rightly their worth. Generous even to excess, he is persistent only for a caprice which becomes indifferent to him so soon as he has attained it. In like manner, has he learned only to command, but never, like the Captain, to obey. He is full of courtesy, but it is of that distinguished kind which is not rooted in benevolence for those with whom he has to do, but in the wish to be considered very good-hearted and compassionate. It is cer-

tainly one of the finest touches in the delineation of his character that, learning that the Captain had spoken with Charlotte depreciatingly of his flute-playing, he should feel himself released from all obligations toward both. That he is full of caprices, but without determination; that he makes not the slightest attempt to control his unjustifiable passion; that the conception of duty seems wholly to be wanting; that he recognizes simply rights, —all this shows us certainly the spoiled son, but shows us also the nobleman of that time. In general, the whole romance, carefully as every trace of place and time is kept out of sight, depicts in an incomparable way the constitution of a portion of society at that period.

If we now accompany the impatient Baron without special sympathy in his progress through the whole book, so long as a gleam of hope remains to him, we cannot nevertheless deny him our sympathy when all hope has vanished. The manner in which he yields to slow decay, making no effort to live, but with a kind of joy gives himself to a lingering death, is powerfully described, and to the amiable man in his hopeless misery no one can deny a tear.

In the picture, he is represented writing to Charlotte of the country-seat, and impatience is manifest in his fingers, and breathing in every feature of his countenance. With raven locks, pale and embrowned, a form light and elastic, a brilliant and showy manner, he is nevertheless more cavalier than soldier. Although an ele-

gant cavalry officer, he is deficient in that subjection to strict discipline which is as much due from himself as from others, and which extends to mind and heart as well as to things external. He is good only for attack, for defence he is wholly unprepared.



Fr. Vernet del. J.L. Roulé exec.

Charlotte

CHARLOTTE.

(*Elective Affinities.*)

If it is the greatest merit of an artist to hold a mirror up to Nature, and to delineate living men, not abstractions, or so-called ideals, and to give to these men a clearly-defined physiognomy, so that they disclose to us not only their native characteristics, but also their rank, culture, destiny, then Charlotte is one of the most successful, because one of the most individualized creations, not merely of Goethe, but of German poetry in general.

One may see in all her movements the gracious lady baroness, not the supercilious wife of the country squire, but the finely-cultured, beautiful, and nobly-developed lady who, in the splendor of a court, has perfectly learned the art of self-control. She is the most reasonable gentlewoman that we have ever met, without losing thereby her special charm. The reserve and calmness which at court became a second nature, were with her

original, and could, therefore, harmoniously unfold themselves without destroying what was individual and peculiar in her character. Moderation with her is not, as is so often the case in that circle, a mask behind which the most inflamed passions hide themselves, but the result of a sweet concord of qualities, and elevates her womanhood. It shows itself also in the control which she exercises over her quick sensibilities. How pleasantly is the story told, where she, busily engaged with laying out her park, all at once loses her pleasure therein, because some of her plans are rightfully criticised!

The extraordinary clearness, self-consciousness, and intelligence of Charlotte, form an especially charming contrast to the unconscious but more intellectual character of Ottilie. In the latter, we see a woman of South Germany; but in the former, a thorough Protestant woman of North Germany.

Another beautiful characteristic in her is the want of all sensuousness, although she is certainly capable of inspiring strong inclination through the beauty and the natural nobility of her character. She wants the power of inflaming the passions which belongs to her more highly-gifted rival. The absence of all jealousy is a not less marked individual trait, an absence which may be sufficiently explained through her almost involuntary liking for the Captain, since otherwise no woman of the world, in her condition, could regard Ottilie without dislike and ill-will.

In this visible absence of all passion, in this moderation of her whole character, equally removed from either extreme of coldness or warmth, lies something so tranquillizing that it brings out into greater prominence the hasty, ardent, inflammable character of Edward. The poet has chiselled out her figure so finely and perfectly, that one would ever be reminded of the quiet dignity and symmetry of an antique goddess, if the air of a modern lady of the world were not so visible in her.

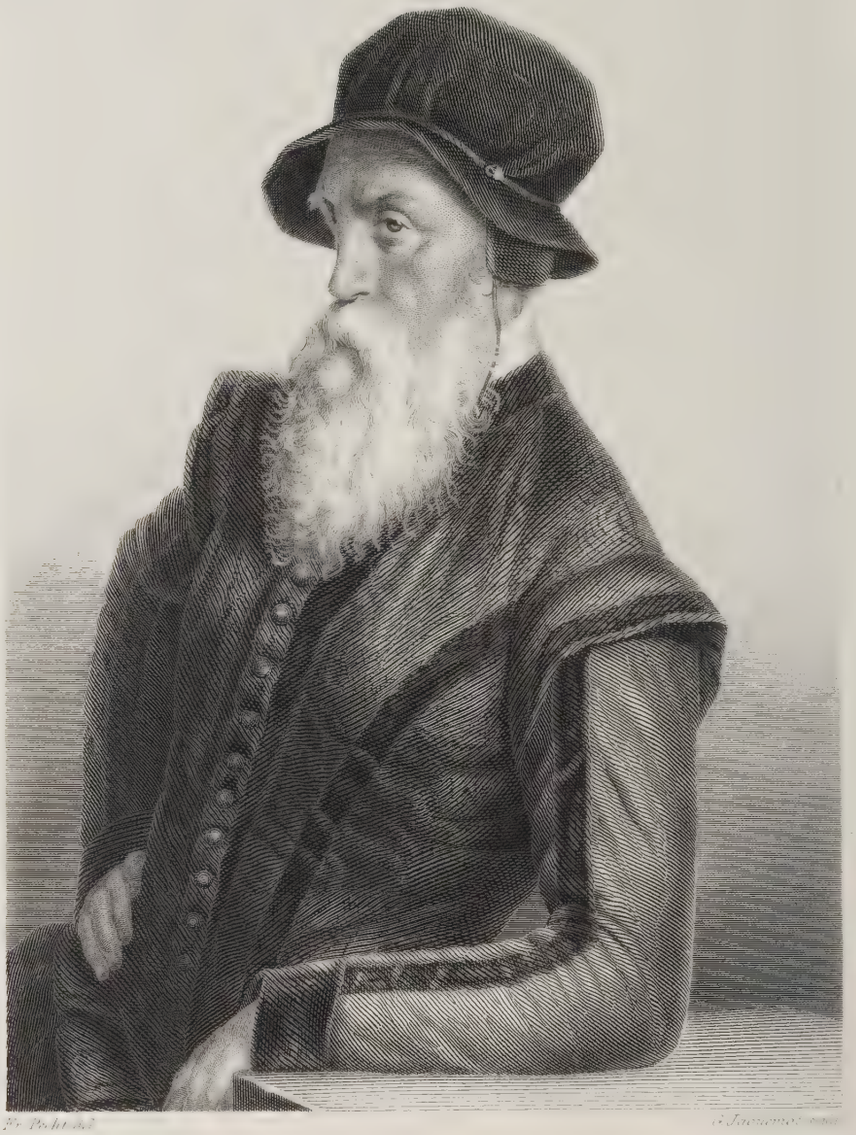
In Charlotte is almost wholly wanting that naturalness which is so conspicuous in Ottilie, and hence it is that, in spite of her virtues, and especially of her good sense, we are so readily reminded of her defects; of a certain want of imagination, and the entire absence of what is piquant or startling in her, one can calculate with almost mathematical certainty what in certain circumstances she will do and say: she is neither witty nor humorous, but happily, also, neither unduly sentimental nor emotional. There is a certain sober moderation, united with her fine tact and her strict conscientiousness, which admirably characterizes her North-German origin. Though she belongs to that rare class of women who are sensible, yet is she also just and fair-minded. She knows how to make allowance for the amiable weaknesses of others, and is, nevertheless, strict in judging herself—qualities that exalt her in our estimation, although they do not make us love her the

more, since her virtues plainly cost her but little effort. It is plain, also, that the same equanimity of mind which enables her to bear adversity with grace and calmness, and which was manifested in her first marriage, with a man older than herself, and whom she did not love, would enable her to adapt herself readily to happier fortunes.

Women in whom the intellect rather than the senses rule, and who have much intelligence, are for the most part very active, and we see Charlotte continually busy planting, building, planning, yet are we never specially interested in her activity, because the power to produce any thing original in act or thought is wholly wanting. In this respect, she is far surpassed by Ottilie, although the latter does not suspect this, and, in her humility, admires and honors the superiority of Charlotte.

It is thus, engrossed in her improvements, in her planning and planting, that Charlotte is brought before us. We see her as she is described in the beginning of the romance, thinking upon new pathways and garden-beds, arbors, and hedges, and we are led to suspect, perhaps, that there is something a little narrow and paltry in her character. She is a blonde of a too delicate hue, large and well-developed in form, without nervous excitability. More beautiful and majestic than properly charming and attractive, she was admirably constituted to make an impression upon a young man like Edward, and to enchain him until he came to possess her, or

rather believed himself to possess her, and then, certainly, the thought would arise in him that she, who was so perfectly mistress of herself, could not devote herself without reserve to another, and so minister to his highest happiness.



Benvenuto Cellini



BENVENUTO CELLINI.

(*Benvenuto Cellini.*)

Between the glorious age of the renaissance, that remarkable period from the middle of the fifteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century, and our restless time, exists a great similarity, as has often been remarked. It may, therefore, not be unprofitable, taking occasion from the charming picture which Goethe has given us in his masterly translation of Cellini, to draw some parallels between the condition of art at that time and the present, the former having been graphically brought before us, through that biography, in its modes of thought and manner of life.

The distinction between these two periods is by no means so great as one might think; only we would remark, in passing, that the position of an artist in Italy at that time was much more fortunate than that of one in half-civilized Germany, as we may see, not to our honor, by examining the life of the almost con-

temporaneous and much more distinguished Albert Dürer. The position of the Italian artist at that time much more resembled that of the artist to-day with us, since the schoolmaster has partially beaten it into the heads of a majority of the Germans, that art effects a higher cultivation, and increases all the nobler enjoyments of life, and they must, therefore, regard it fitting to show some consideration to its cultivators—a view of things which one rarely thinks out for himself, since the Germans were originally more rude than all the other European nations, but, at the same time, much more capable of improvement; the instruction they have received has so much profited them, that artists now in Germany have a higher social position than elsewhere, except it be with the politic French and Italians; at any event, much better than with the English and Russians and others. It is true, also, that more is done proportionally for art in Germany than in all the lands of Europe, if we except Belgium and Holland.

On the other hand, Dürer and Cellini had one great advantage over their rivals of to-day: they were both goldsmiths, and worked at their handicraft. The senseless dividing line which now exists between artists and artisans, did not exist at that time, and, for that very reason, handicraft stood on an average much higher and was more artistic, nor did the artist become a mere mechanic. In this way our Cellini became gradually, step by step, an artist, without ever having suspected

the distinction. In this way he brought into art all that great practical skill that one so much admires in him; he knew how to help himself in every emergency, and, if necessary, to cast the pewter platters of the cook into his smelting-furnace. Perhaps, also, he in this way caught that brutal spirit of bullying which made so prominent a feature of his character. To-day one does not praise himself, but the artist permits others to praise him; this is that modern invention which, originating with the French, has gradually but widely taken root among us, so that every ordinary academy-director permits himself to be compared with Michael Angelo or Phidias, in the same spirit as our Benvenuto was accustomed to do, when he enforced his claims with the fist. The cunning with which the latter illumined his figures before King Francis, in order that they might sustain comparison with the antique, finds its parallel to-day in the artistic manner in which the famous masters expose their works only in the most favorable manner possible, and not in the great places of exhibition, where they would be exposed to impartial criticism.

To nobles and princes the relation was nearly the same as it is again to-day, after three centuries of great humiliation, but greatly different is it as regards citizenship and political life. In this respect, Cellini had no presentiment of that exceptional position, as it is, which unfortunately artists take to-day—a mystical position

between the heaven and the earth, which is neither fish nor flesh. He fulfilled his civic duties like any other citizen, became a soldier when he must, and, always a boaster, had done the best he could, as his defence of Englesburg shows us, a true model of braggadocio. Nothing was then more common than that artists should be elected into the councils of their cities, become burgomasters and judges, as was the case with Ghiberti, Master Stephen Lochner, and others. On the other hand, the condition of the artists of to-day is in one relation much more citizen-like: they are for the most part married, and usually happily married; they are respected fathers of families, while in the life of Cellini the entire deterioration of morals, as it then existed in Italy and France, mirrored itself. He had only sweethearts and housekeepers, but remained unmarried, as did the most of his famous contemporaries, Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Leonardo.

Also in another important point are the artists of our day more citizen-like; they remain, after their student-years are completed, quietly resident in one place, while they of the fifteenth century continually wandered about. Especially our Florentine Hector gave himself no rest, and sought commissions everywhere: and, in order to fulfil them, continually changed his abode; while now, one takes his orders quietly by the post. On the other hand, the associated relation of artists among themselves has to-day a surprising sim-

ilarity with it, as it existed at the time of our roving goldsmith. It has not become much better, and it could scarcely become worse, although one does not have recourse now, as then, to his fists or his dagger, or even to poison. As he had always to strive with rivals, never found himself sufficiently appreciated, and always believed himself oppressed by cabals, so is it still in greater or less degree in our own time. There are still boasters enough, like Cellini, who are intolerable to all, and who, in their unbounded egotism, appreciate nobody but themselves.

Artists are more truly human than other men, not only in a bad, but also in a good sense; they are more accessible to noble impulses, and no one is more ready to bestow enthusiastic applause than they. It is indeed touching to observe with what reverent regard our Cellini speaks of the great Michael Angelo, whose praise avails more with him than that of a multitude of kings.

If we cannot conceal the dark features of his character, since they thrust themselves upon the reader of his biography, it is better that we speak of his strength, his courage, his restless industry, of the true unselfishness with which he sacrifices all for art, of the noble thirst for labor that consumed him day and night, and impelled him to strive after perfection. A brilliant example of this is found in his narrative of the casting of the Perseus, which reads like an exciting drama, and which unconsciously reveals his own conviction of the excel-

lence of the work. An examination of it as it now stands in the *loggia* of Lanzi in Florence, shows us that he deceived himself. It is an almost insipid figure, but, on the contrary, very admirable are his vases, as are generally those works which he undertook for decoration. His rich fantasy, his energetic vitality, his fine taste, are here wholly in place, and one remarks nothing of that want of depth and ardent love which, as it was conspicuous in his life, so also is manifest in his artistic labors. But this want one easily forgets in view of the liveliness and of the tasteful splendor, as well as of the energy and spirit, which distinguish each part no less than the whole of his work, so that they have justly transmitted his name with honor to posterity.

THE END.

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